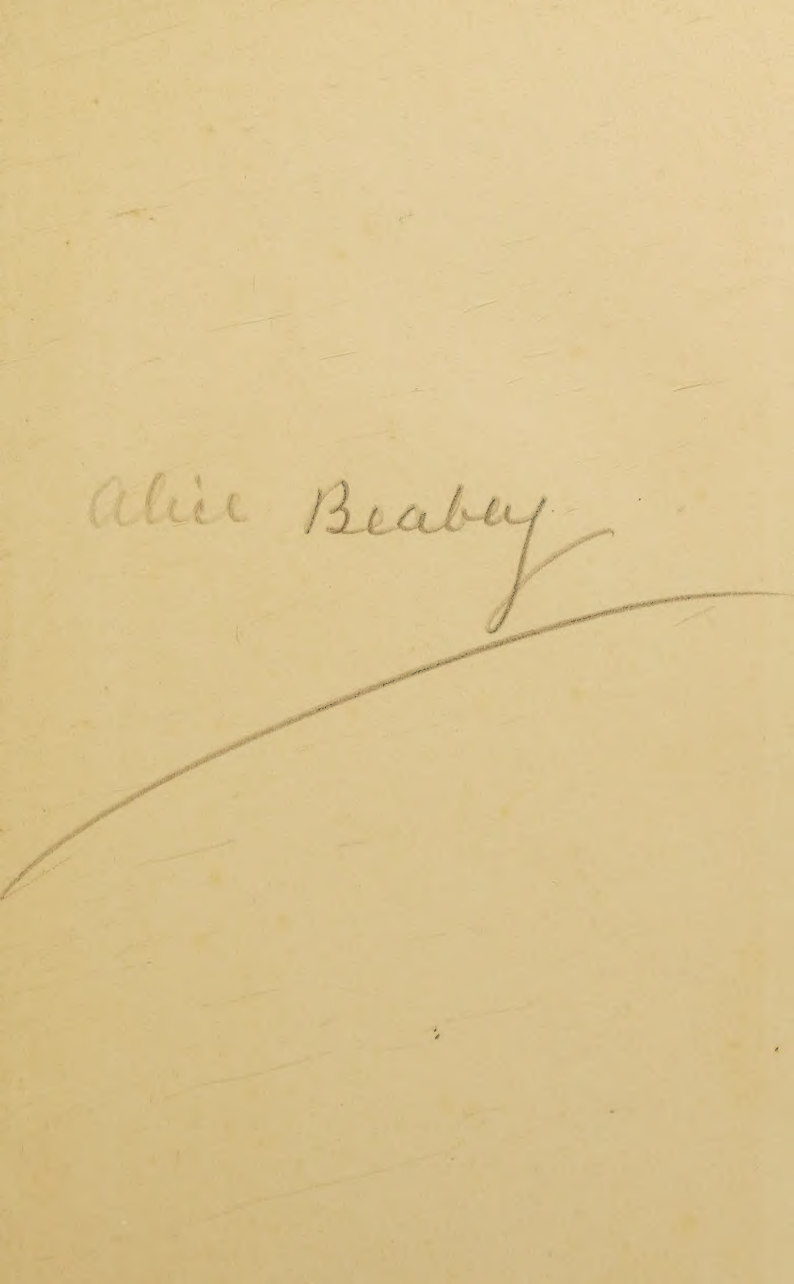
RETURNED EMPTY

By FLORENCE L. BARCLAY


Alice Beabey

BY FLORENCE L. BARCLAY

THE WHEELS OF TIME
THE ROSARY
THE MISTRESS OF SHENSTONE
THE FOLLOWING OF THE STAR
THROUGH THE POSTERN GATE
THE UPAS TREE
THE BROKEN HALO
THE WALL OF PARTITION
MY HEART'S RIGHT THERE
IN HOC ✠ VINCE
THE WHITE LADIES OF WORCESTER
RETURNED EMPTY
SHORTER WORKS

Returned Empty

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Returned Empty

By

Florence L. Barclay

Author of "The Rosary," etc.

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To
CATHERINE

Lord Tennyson's poem, "Crossing the Bar,"
is printed by kind permission of
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SCENE I

Glass With Care

Scene I

GLASS WITH CARE

A LIMITLESS expanse of opal sea, calm and unruffled, reflecting the crimson and gold of the sky, as the sun went down behind pine woods and moors.

A clear-cut line of cliffs, rising sheer from the stretch of golden sands.

Whirling white wings, as the gulls, shrieking in hungry chorus, swooped to the fringe of the outgoing tide.

A narrow path, skirting the edge of the cliffs, all among the pungent fragrance of gorse and heather and yellow bracken.

Along this path, on a warm September evening, swung a solitary figure; a man with sad eyes, feeling himself a blot upon the landscape, yet drinking in every tint of sunset glory, every wild wonder of snowy

wings, every whiff of crushed fragrance. And, as he walked, the water down below seemed to call to him in a silent chorus of sparkling voices: "This is the way to the City of Gold. Leap from the cliff! Take to the waters! This, and this only, is your road for Home."

It was the Lonely Man's thirtieth birthday. Nobody had wished him many happy returns of the day. Nobody knew that it was his birthday. He would not have known it himself had it not been for the soiled and faded label which he carried in his pocket-book: GLASS WITH CARE printed on one side; and, on the other, RETURNED EMPTY. Beneath the former was written, in red ink: *Luke xii. 6*, beneath the latter: *September* 12, 1883.

This label had been tied to the helpless bundle left, thirty years before on a door-step in a London suburb, one moonless October night. The man-child, wailing forlornly in the calico wrappings, was obviously a month-old baby.

The matron of the Foundlings' Institution, to which a stalwart policeman carried the bundle, after she had handed over the infant to her most capable nurse to be washed and clothed and fed, carefully proceeded to examine the wrappings and the label.

The wrappings held no clue. No laundry marks were on the strips of calico sheeting; no fair linen or fine lace pointed to a stealthy removal from a palatial mansion to the cold comfort of the suburban doorstep. No jewelled locket held a young mother's wistful face, or a tress of golden hair. The lonely baby had arrived in the coarsest of unbleached calico sheeting. "Ten-three a yard," said the matron, and took up the label.

"'Returned Empty.' Well, *that* he undoubtedly was, bless his poor little tummy! '*September the 12th.*' Just over a month ago. That must be his birthday, poor mite! 'Glass with care.' Well, I never! They might at least have chosen a label marked

'Perishable.' And what's written here? '*Luke xii. 6.*' They had better have left the Bible out of their wrong-doings."

The matron was thorough in the search for a possible clue. She fetched a Bible and looked up the reference.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"

"Well, I never!" said the matron. "So they label that bonny boy a little worthless sparrow!" The matron waxed eloquent in her indignation. "This bit of flotsam on life's ocean, this helpless waif, flung in its cheap wrappings on the mercy of strangers, is valued by those who forsook it at less than the Jewish half-farthing!"

The chaplain had preached, quite lately, on the fifth sparrow thrown in to make the bargain. So, when he came for the christening, and names must be given to the nameless, remembering the sermon and the label, the matron "named this child," Luke Sparrow.

Sometimes, laughing, they called him "Little Glass with Care," he was so easily troubled, so sensitive to harsh sounds or roughness of touch. His baby lip quivered so readily; his dark eyes became deep pools of silent misery. And in another sense he was like a glass, during his babyhood. His beautiful little face mirrored things not seen. He would turn away from toys, and lie gazing at the sunbeams or at as much as could be seen of the sky through the high windows; and sometimes he would stretch out his arms to nothingness, and, arching his little body, lift it almost off his mattress, as if in response to some yearning call of love.

The first word he spoke was "Coming." He would shout: "Coming! Coming!" when nobody had called. He turned, impatient, from kind bosoms ready to cuddle him; he slipped unresponsive from laps in which he might have nestled softly, and hurled himself where only hard boards

received him, or a cold wall bruised his baby head.

"'Now we see as in a mirror enigmas,'" quoted the matron, whose minister habitually preached from the Revised Version. "What are you trying to remember, you queer little Bundle of Mystery? Who calls, when you say 'Coming'? What waiting breast which is not here, makes you bump your poor little head against the wall?"

But, by the time he was three years old, he had outlived even the matron's tenderness. His little heart opened to none of them. His grave, sweet beauty grew repellent. His solemn eyes looked past their most persuasive danglings. Poor little "Returned Empty!" His body throve under their care. His spirit seemed to yearn for something they could not give. He was a lonely baby.

Years went by. He outgrew the nursery, and passed into the school. Steadily he worked his way to the top of each class and

stayed there. He took very little account of his school-fellows. The cruel could not hurt him ; the friendly failed to reach him.

" First Prize ; Luke Sparrow."

He made his graceful, solemn bow, and took the book ; but his dark eyes, undazzled by the grand, gold chain, looked past the portly Mayor, and failed to see the smile of approval on the head-master's face ; his ears were deaf to the plaudits of assembled patrons and friends. He returned to his place, hugging this book. Nobody asked to see it ; he shewed it to nobody. He was a lonely little boy.

He preferred study, involving solitude, to games which hurled him among companions of his own age. The chaplain took an interest in the queerly brilliant little mind, and gave the boy constant private coaching, with the result that he won a Grammar School scholarship, carrying advantages which he could not have enjoyed at the Foundlings' Institution.

Two passions at this time began to possess him, giving him his only thrills of pleasure. The first was his love of the water. He swam like a fish. The first time he went with the other boys to the swimming baths he stood on the edge watching the swimmers; gazing, with brooding eyes, at the water, as if striving to capture an evasive memory.

"Jump in, Sparrow!" shouted the young master in charge. "There must always be a beginning. Don't funk it!"

The lithe body quivered all over, a ripple of muscles under the smooth skin. He walked down the steps with the sudden alertness of one awaking from a long dream, slipped into the water, and, as it lapped around him, glided forward and swam from one end of the bath to the other, with the ease and grace of a little water animal.

They called him the Frog. They called him the Minnow. Later on, they called him the Sea-Lion. It mattered nothing to him

what they called him. He swam for the sheer joy of it. He felt more alive in the water than on land. He seemed to come nearer to finding something he had been seeking all his short life.

His first swim in the sea brought the swift resolve to eschew heaven. "Why?" asked another boy, to whom in an unusual moment of expansiveness he confided as they shared a towel, this momentous decision, "Because," said Luke, "once we get there, the Bible says there shall be no more sea."

His other passion was for gazing in at windows, from the outside, after dark, when firelight gleamed fitfully on shining furniture; when unknown people sat talking, and smiling, and handing each other cups of tea; when they lighted lamps and candles, forgetting to draw the curtains and leaving the windows unshuttered.

When he left school and was launched on life, a lonely youth, to fend for

himself, earning enough by his pen for his own modest needs, rousing himself to a few hours of brilliant work if he wanted new books, new clothes, or a complete holiday—this strange fascination grew. A hunger possessed him to look in at other people's windows. He would walk miles to satisfy this craving. Out into the country, where farm kitchens sent a ruddy glow across the fields; where cottage windows gleamed like friendly stars. He would draw near, avoiding kennels and gravel paths, and feast his eyes on cosy rooms; husbands and wives, seated in easy chairs at the end of the day's work; fathers and mothers, among their children; comfortable cats, purring before the fire; faithful dogs, suddenly alert, ears pricking, eyes on the window pane.

He had no wish to be within. His pleasure was to look in from outside, as a being from another world, with no personal share in this life's loves and joys, with an insatiable desire to witness them.

Sometimes the inmates of these lighted rooms chanced to look up and see the strained face and sombre eyes gazing through the window. Then they would make a movement of fear or of anger; or a kindly move, as if to ask him in. In either case he would turn away quickly and disappear in the darkness. He had no wish to enter, he had no desire to share their joys. He only asked to view them from without.

Yet gradually the conviction grew within him that this passion was a quest: that some day he would look through a window and see a room which should seem to him that thing he had never known—Home.

Grand interiors he saw, in London streets and squares; glimpses of tasteful furniture, art treasures, a suitable setting for perfectly gowned grace and beauty; swiftly concealed by the drawing of velvet curtains.

It angered him that the illusive sense of home drew nearer to him in these fitful visions of wealth and loveliness than when

he looked into humbler and more simple houses. All his sympathies were with those who worked and toiled, living by the soil and upon it.

He liked the farmer who drank ale from a brown jug, while his pleasant wife enjoyed her dish of tea.

Peering through area railings into the basement of London houses, he liked the stout cook who stood before a glowing kitchen range, toasting-fork in hand, flinging remarks over her portly print shoulder to the pretty young housemaid, perched on the kitchen table, swinging her feet and darning a stocking.

He loved the grey parrot with a naughty eye, no doubt banished from the drawing-room on account of its language, sidling up and down its perch, in the cage under the window. He felt sure it was making valuable additions to its vocabulary, what time the heat of the fire on one side and the flippant attitude of the pretty housemaid on the other, annoyed the stout cook.

He disliked the beautiful woman in the room above, who reclined among silken cushions, giving languid orders to a deferential butler, then waved an impatient command to the footman to draw the curtains. Yet the drawing of those curtains shut out the haunting sense of home, which had grown within him as he watched the woman among the silken cushions.

He returned to his solitary rooms and spent the evening writing an article in which he decried the idle rich and extolled the humble poor. Yet, while he wrote, he wondered, half wistfully, who he might be who had the right to come in and fill the armchair drawn close to that couch of silken cushions. He wondered this; and wondering, ceased writing, lit his pipe and took to dreaming.

He was a lonely youth.

By degrees his gift of descriptive writing won him an acknowledged place in the world of journalism. He was trusted by

an important newspaper to observe and record various historic scenes in the great metropolis—a royal funeral; a coronation; the city's welcome to a famous general.

He wrote with a peculiar detachment, never obtruding his own personality; viewing events in their larger meaning, as well as in careful completeness of minor detail; yet with no throb of human sentiment, no personal touch of intimate feeling.

Later on, he went in a similar capacity to India, and wrote one of the finest descriptions on record of the royal Durbar.

He moved amid scenes of varied interest; he made many acquaintances, but no close friends.

His distant travels accomplished, he would return to his comfortless rooms, and work in solitude.

That within him which might have responded to love, and leapt into intimacy, seemed shut away behind prison bars. When Love drew near, he could but look

forth with haunted eyes, watching while Love, rebuffed, moved sadly away.

He was a lonely man.

When he allowed himself a holiday, he packed a small knapsack, went by the fastest route possible to Scotland, Cornwall, Devon or Norfolk—anywhere where he could find a rugged coast; long stretches of gorse and heather; villages, which he could reach by nightfall.

Each morning he would be on the shore at sunrise, swimming, with strong, eager strokes, up the golden path toward the dazzling glory of the rising sun. Or, if he chanced, at close of day, to find himself where the coast faced westward, he would slip in to the water at sunset and glide, with slow, dreamy motion and folded arms, up the crimson way toward the setting sun.

No day seemed complete to him unless it began and ended in the sea.

So, on this 12th of September, though the sun was sinking behind distant moors,

when the waters called, he made his way down the cliff, walked half a mile or so along the shore until he found cover among rocks; then swam swiftly out to sea, recapturing the crimson ball as it disappeared behind the pine woods.

When he turned for a last sight of it, he noticed a fine old house, standing castle-like on the summit of the cliff, just above the rocks beside which he had left his clothes. It had not been in view when he had quitted the high path for the beach and the lee of the cliffs.

He swam back to the shore, dressed, lighted his pipe, and sat among the rocks till twilight fell.

The moon appeared, a huge yellow ball, rising out of the sea.

He found himself humming an old song he had picked up the year before, while on a walking tour through Brittany.

" Au clair de la lune,
Mon ami Pierrot !
Prête-moi ta plume.
Pour écrire un mot.

Ma chandelle est morte,
Je n'ai plus de feu !
Ouvre-moi ta porte
Pour l'amour de Dieu ! "

The pathetic words, and the melancholy air, seemed strangely suited to his mood and to the place.

The twilight deepened.

He rose and climbed a zigzag path leading to the top of the cliff.

" Ma chandelle est morte,
Je n'ai plus de feu ! "

He reached the top, and passed through an iron gate.

" Ouvre-moi ta porte,
Pour l'amour de Dieu ! "

Almost before he realised that he was trespassing, he was standing on the lawn of the house he had seen from the sea.

SCENE II

The Unexpected Welcome

Scene II

THE UNEXPECTED WELCOME

A VERANDA, overhung by rambler roses, ran the full length of the front of the house.

Through the diamond panes of low lattice windows, the fitful glow of firelight gleamed.

The Lonely Man hesitated, half turned away, then, drawn by an irresistible attraction, stepped on to the veranda, stood in the shadow, and looked in at a window.

The room was so large, and its occupants so far from the windows, that the silent intruder had small need to fear detection.

His first furtive glance into the interior awakened, with a sudden throb, more strongly than ever before, that illusive sense of home.

He drew nearer.

A long, low room; the many windows running half the length of the veranda, a cushioned window seat beneath them. A door, on his left, opened on to the veranda. At the opposite side of the room, another door, standing ajar, led into a large hall. At the top of the room, on his right, a log fire burned in the huge fireplace. The leaping flames illumined the oak panelling and played on the carved beams in the ceiling. Persian rugs, in soft tints of blue and rose, lay upon the polished parquet.

A couch, on the further side of the fireplace, and at right-angles to it, faced the windows. In the centre, opposite the hearth, stood two large easy chairs.

These chairs were occupied by a young man in tweeds and shooting-boots—who lay back luxuriously with legs outstretched, as if long tramping in the heather had earned him a welcome rest—and by a very lovely girl, whose smiles and looks of happy tenderness were divided between the sturdy

figure in the other chair, and a very small boy in Highland dress, who darted to and fro between them, trying to intercept a ball as they threw it to one another ; a brave little figure, in tartan kilt and velvet jacket ; his brown curls tumbled, his dark eyes shining, as he fell, over his father's legs, headlong into his mother's lap.

One casement stood open, and the lonely watcher could hear their merry laughter and the boy's triumphant shout as he snatched the ball from his mother's hand.

Holding it above his head, he danced out into the middle of the room, in full view of the windows.

The watching eyes narrowed in puzzled wonder.

Why was that leaping figure so familiar ? The two in the chairs awakened no memories. The lovely woman, with her fair skin and coils of shining hair ; the man, long-limbed, freckled and ruddy—total strangers both. Yet this child, who called them " Father " and " Mother," this little

dark head, brown, oval face, black level brows ? Where had he met the imp before ?

His mind went back some twenty odd years to the Christmas after his eighth birthday. The kind Mayor had made a feast at the Townhall for the children from the Institution. They were given funny dresses to wear. A Highland dress was found for him, kilt and plaid and dirk complete. The little black velvet jacket had silver buttons with thistles on them. Some ladies talked about him. They said : " With those wonderful dark eyes and curls, he should have come as the Black Prince. Who is he ? " They kissed him and gave him chocolates. He hated being kissed ; but he liked the chocolates ; and he liked being called the Black Prince. At one end of the hall there was a long mirror. He slipped away and stood before it. He had never before seen himself full length in a mirror. He held the box of chocolates above his head——

Why—yes ! This little boy with the ball

was an exact replica of the figure he had seen reflected in the mirror ; a replica of himself.

He felt dizzy—shaken.

He was turning away ; but at that moment, the hall beyond was illuminated.

Something moved across it.

A woman appeared in the open doorway —an arresting figure—a woman with snow-white hair, tall, stately, matronly ; extraordinarily beautiful, with a calm, melancholy beauty ; a woman well past middle age, yet with soft white skin, unwrinkled ; upright carriage ; a noble, gracious personality.

" In the dark, children ? " she said ; then put out her hand, and the room flashed into light.

" Grannie ! " shouted the boy, and ran to meet her.

With her hand upon his shoulder, she moved slowly into the middle of the room.

The young man half rose, offering his chair.

" Do not move, Colin," she said and went to the couch.

The boy climbed up beside her, nestling his dark curls into the lace at her bosom. She put her arm about him with a gesture infinitely tender and protective.

The younger woman spoke. "Colin and I were lazing in the firelight, mother. Then Nigel arrived with his ball, and forced us to be energetic."

The watcher at the window pressed closer to the pane. In the fascination of the scene he forgot to fear discovery.

By the brighter light the couple appeared older than he had at first thought them. She was probably his own age, even older; her husband, two or three years her senior. She had inherited her mother's remarkable beauty. It was good to see them together. The one revealed the youthful loveliness of the past; the other promised the maturer beauty yet to come; and both were very good to look upon.

The man reclining in the chair between them, gazed intently at his own boots. He turned them from side to side, as the flame

played upon them, and examined them critically. Then he thrust his hands deep into his breeches' pockets, stretched his long legs to the fire, and stared at his boots with whole-hearted admiration.

For the first time in all the long years, the Lonely Man without, yearned to be within. His loneliness seized and shook him. All his searching, all his watching, all his hungry, forlorn hours, seemed to have reached their culmination. This—this, at last, was Home! Yet he stood outside, as a watcher from another world; he had no part nor lot in the love and comfort within.

His yearning gaze was fixed upon the central figure in the scene. Yes, she would always be the central figure in any scene. In court or cottage alike, she would be queen.

No wonder his little double dashed forward when she said: "In the dark, children?" If *that* voice could have called him, when he was a lonely little boy, how gladly he—who never came when he was

called—would have shouted "Coming!" and flown to her embrace.

He looked at the dark head, so like his own, nestling against the softness of her breast. He could see her bosom rise and fall, in steady, rhythmic breathing, beneath the little olive cheek. Dark lashes veiled the bright brown eyes. Nigel was growing sleepy. What wonder, in such "sweet security."

Nigel's parents talked together.

She—sat silent, looking down at the small face against her breast.

It struck him that there was an aloofness about her, a loneliness which almost matched his own. Tragedy had laid its mark upon that noble face; a sorrow borne in patient silence; an agony unshared; a grief too deep to be plumbed by human sympathy.

It seemed to the Lonely Man that his loneliness would be easier to bear, for having looked upon her; his "Returned Empty" life would hold more possibility of fulness;

his "Glass with care" would be less sensitively brittle, for having seen the mastered tragedy in that calm face, crowned by the silvered hair.

One final look; then he must turn away and be lost again in the outer darkness.

His face was close against the glass. His hungry eyes peered through.

At that moment she raised her head, looked straight across to the window, and saw him.

He could not move.

He could not look away. Her eyes gazed into his; right into his, and held them.

She sat perfectly still.

The hand stroking little Nigel's leg, paused.

The boy's lashes lay upon his cheek. He stirred uneasily. The hand stroked again.

Her face blanched to ashen whiteness; then the delicate colour flooded it once more.

Still her eyes held him.

At last her lips moved, silently. They formed one word : " Wait."

Presently she rose.

Nigel rubbed his eyes, leapt from the sofa, and found his ball.

She moved toward the window.

The man without stepped back into the shadow.

Nigel had flung the 'ball' at his mother, and fallen over his father's legs. The three were laughing and shouting together.

She came to the open casement, pushed it wider and leaned out.

She spoke very quietly, into the fragrant darkness ; the faintest whisper, yet he heard.

" I was expecting you " . . . Her voice was like the night-wind in the tops of the pine trees ; soft as a sigh, and full of mystery. " Do not go . . . You will find a chair in the corner on your right. Wait there until I am alone."

She drew back into the room, and closed the casement.

He sank into the chair and sat there in the silence, listening to the beating of his heart. It sounded like heavy breakers pounding on the rocks below.

SCENE III

The Expected Guest

Scene III

THE EXPECTED GUEST

HE sat very still, and waited.

He had miles to walk before he could reach an inn; but food and a night's lodging seemed unnecessary considerations in this strange hour.

She had asked him to wait until she should be alone; and he waited.

A motor came to the other side of the house; panted impatiently for five minutes; then sped away into the distance.

He stood up and looked into the room.

It was empty. Fresh logs had been thrown upon the fire. The door into the hall was shut.

Even as he looked, it opened.

An elderly butler appeared, walked forward into the room, hesitated; then

advanced to the garden door, touched a switch, and a couple of hanging lanterns shed a soft light over the veranda. He stood in the doorway, as if momentarily uncertain; then saw the chair and its occupant in the corner on his left, came over to it and delivered his message, in deferential tones, without lifting his eyes.

"Her ladyship bids me say, sir, that dinner will be served in half an hour. If you will follow me, I will show you to your room."

"To my room?"

"Yes, sir. Her ladyship understood you would be able to dine and sleep."

The butler moved to the door, held it wide and waited. There was nothing for it, but to rise and enter.

So the man who had all his life looked in from without now stepped over the threshold and found himself within.

Feeling keenly alive and yet as if moving in a vivid dream, Luke Sparrow walked

across the room, and followed the butler into the brightly lighted hall, and up a wide staircase.

On a table in the hall stood a box of library books, addressed with a brush, in very black ink. Before he realised what he was doing he had read the name—

LADY TINTAGEL

He repeated it to himself as he mounted the stairs. It awakened memories of Camelot. He had never heard of it as a family name; but it seemed in keeping with this romance of an unexpected visit, as an expected guest.

At the top of the stairs the butler paused to say: "Her ladyship desires that you will please yourself, sir, as to whether you dress or not."

Luke smiled. His knapsack held a clean shirt, a razor, a comb, a toothbrush, and half a dozen handkerchiefs.

"I am doing a walking tour," he said.

"You might explain to her ladyship that I have nothing with me but bare necessaries in a small knapsack."

The butler opened a door, switched on the light and stood aside that he might enter.

"You will find all you need here, sir. The door to the left leads into a bath-room. A gong will sound at eight. It is now half-past seven. If you should require anything more, will you be so good as to ring, sir?" He retired, closing the door softly behind him.

Luke looked around and laughed. He wondered what on earth he could find to ring for, which was not already there!

He walked over to the dressing-table, on which were silver-backed brushes, ivory razors, silver-topped bottles!

Laid out upon the bed was a complete suit of dress clothes.

If this was "Colin's" room, he certainly did himself well! If these were "Colin's" clothes they certainly would not fit him!

Laughing again—he who never laughed

—he turned to the bed, flung off his rough Norfolk jacket, and slipped on the smooth black coat with its silk lining. It fitted him perfectly; and he was fastidious about the cut of his clothes.

Should he? . . . Not he! He would never wear another man's garments. He would never stand in another man's shoes. If Lady Tintagel asked him to dine, she must have him as he was. If the lovely daughter looked askance at him, she must learn to understand that you don't carry a dress suit in a knapsack.

But the bath? Yes, rather! That was quite another matter. His long sea swims had made him feel like a kipper.

What a bath-room! Every muscle relaxed in the steaming hot water. A bottle of fragrant aromatic stuff stood temptingly handy. He poured it in, and luxuriated. "Colin" must feel a god, with all this at his command, whenever he came in fagged. He must descend on his admiring womenfolk like a giant refreshed.

A cold shower—and then he blessed heaven he had put a clean shirt in his knapsack.

"Colin's" ivory-handled razors made shaving a positive pastime.

One moment of indecision, as he caught sight of the dress suit upon the bed. Strange that it should fit. He remembered the beautiful rooms downstairs. He would be decidedly out of the picture in his tweeds. He remembered the full-length mirror at the Mayor's party. "He should have come as the Black Prince." How he had enjoyed the remark! His first lesson in vanity. He smiled to think how often he had repeated it to himself, and postured in his shabby little suits. Do people realise how inordinately vain a small boy can be? . . . Should he! No! That was a fancy-dress masquerade; and so would this be. Whatever anybody said, whatever anybody thought, he must meet Lady Tintagel clad at least in the raiment of his own self-respect and independence. It was not as

though he had arrived soaked through and had had to borrow dry things. He brushed his old tweeds vigorously with "Colin's" silver-backed clothes-brush.

A gong boomed sonorously through the house.

As he walked down the stairs he was still thinking, with dreamlike persistence, of the dress difficulty. "I shall say: 'Excuse this rig. One travels light on a walking tour.'"

In the hall the butler waited.

"This way, sir."

SCENE IV

The Prison Bars Dissolve

Scene IV

THE PRISON BARS DISSOLVE

LADY TINTAGEL was alone.

She stood at the far end of the drawing-room.

When he entered she was leaning against the mantelpiece, looking down into the fire.

She turned, still gripping the marble edge with her left hand.

She wore a gown of trailing black velvet and stood on a white Angora rug.

Miles of rose carpet lay between him and the fireplace.

He seemed to be walking uphill, as he came towards her.

When he reached the rug at last, he and she seemed to be standing together on the summit of a delectable mountain. His mind still ran on his unsuitable attire, but he forgot the sentence he had prepared.

"I couldn't," was his lame apology.

She looked at him and smiled. "*You*—wouldn't," she said.

There was such complete understanding in the grave regard of her kind eyes, in the low tones of her voice, so sweet and full of music.

It was all strangely intimate. As he stood beside her, lines he had heard years before flashed into his mind.

> "Two men looked out through prison bars;
> One saw mud; the other, stars."

Hitherto he had seen mud—always mud. In her presence he realised the possibility of seeing stars—undreamed-of stars.

And his prison bars themselves seemed vanishing.

Something captive in him broke its chains and leapt out into liberty.

And still she spoke no word; but her eyes dwelt on him with that all-enveloping, comprehending look of tenderness.

An unspoken sentence seemed to hang

suspended. The silence was tense with it, as when a great orchestra, ready to sound the opening strain of a mighty symphony, waits, with eye, hand, and ear alert, for the first beat of the lifted baton.

But on the instant, came an anti-climax.

"Dinner is served, my lady," announced a deferential voice.

She laughed. "I suppose one *must* eat," she said; and his common sense wondered why she said it, and why the same thought, unspoken, had been in his own mind.

She laid her hand within his arm, and they moved slowly down the room together. Walking so with her, he noted that she was slightly taller than he. She leaned on him. He felt vividly alive. Where was his shell—his shell of morbid reserve, in which he had hidden himself since his babyhood?

He tried to ask her how it came about that she had been expecting him; but something restrained the question.

He wanted to tell her all about himself,

right from the beginning; all he had thought, and felt, and suffered; his shrinking from intimacy with his fellow-men; his loneliness; his shameful habit—he knew, now, that it was shameful—of looking in, unseen, at other people's windows, his half-unconscious belief that some day he would look in, out of the darkness, and see a room which his spirit would acclaim as home; and how, to-day—at last—But he could not tell her that! Yes, he could! He could tell her anything. She would understand. And when his confession was over, he would kneel before her—as a tired little boy might kneel at his mother's knees at bedtime—and say his prayers. Then she would lay her hands upon his head, and Divine forgiveness and benediction would be his.

They were crossing the hall. The butler stood at the dining-room door.

"After dinner," she said, "you must tell me all."

SCENE V

"I have Waited So Long!"

Scene V

"I HAVE WAITED SO LONG!"

THE round table was laid for two.

"I thought——" he said.

"Colin and Eva? No; their home is twelve miles from here. They were spending the afternoon with me. I live alone."

"I thought I was using your son-in-law's room."

"No," she said, "oh, no! That room——" she paused. "The room you used—is my husband's dressing-room. Since I lost him, it has been kept exactly as he left it. For over thirty years it has looked, each day, just as if he had used it the day before. It did not give you the feeling of a disused apartment?"

"No," he said; "I thought——"

"You thought it was Colin's? No; Colin

has never been into that room. In fact, none enter there. It is a sanctuary of mine."

Her beautiful eyes were on his face as she said the words, full of an expression which he failed to fathom. He wondered why he should have been ushered into a sanctuary forbidden to others. Yet was he not, also, prepared to admit her into the sanctuary of his inner life, to which none had ever gained admission ?

The presence of the old man-servant, who did not leave the room, restrained more intimate conversation. He found himself wondering what they would say when at last they were really alone.

She talked of the beauty of the surrounding country ; the wild hills, the heather ; the pine woods, full of health-giving fragrance.

He told her of his walking tours.

" It is the only holiday I care for ; to walk and walk, alone with Nature, from sunrise to sunset. Usually I reach an inn,

by nightfall; but it does not trouble me if I don't. On warm nights, I would just as soon sleep in the open." He looked up, with the rare smile which softened his face into extraordinary sweetness. "I am afraid you are harbouring a tramp, Lady Tintagel."

She met the smile with her own. "Am I?" Her voice dropped very low. "My tramp has tramped a long way to reach harbour."

"A long way? I seem to have been walking all my life, just that I might reach here to-night."

With a swift movement, she leaned forward and laid her hand on his.

"Wait!" she said.

It was the first time she had touched his hand with hers.

An unexpected emotion awoke within him. It was as if she had pressed an electric switch, as he had seen her do when entering the darkening room. His inner being seemed flooded with light. His cold,

patient apathy quickened suddenly into impatience. He forgot conventions. He lost control of himself. He threw common sense to the winds. He caught the hand she had withdrawn, and gripped it.

"I can't wait," he said. "I have waited so long. I want to talk to you."

He felt like a headstrong boy who refuses to be good. He felt like a lover who suddenly gives way to the desire, cost what it may, to master his mistress. He felt like a drowning man catching at a rope. He felt like nothing he had ever felt before. And it soothed him to see this stately woman quiver and turn pale. Serve her right! What was she doing to him? Why did her touch go to his brain like the instant intoxication of champagne to a starving man? He felt reckless. Devil take the consequences! He couldn't play-act any more.

She rose at once. His obvious emotion restored her self-control.

"Come," she said quietly. Then to the

old man-servant, discreetly busying himself at the sideboard: "Serve the fruit and coffee in the Oak Room, Thomas."

Even while he blindly followed her, Luke felt a moment of surprise that the order received no deferential acknowledgment. He glanced at the man. Tears were running down his furrowed cheeks.

Strange—even where all was strange. Why should their emotion move this carefully trained automaton?

Lady Tintagel took up a wrap as they passed through the hall, went straight through the Oak Room, and out at the door leading on to the veranda.

SCENE VI

"Sunset and Evening Star"

Scene VI

"SUNSET AND EVENING STAR"

THE moon had mounted into the heavens, and now cast a path of silver light across the sea.

They stood together looking down upon it.

"I came that way," he said. "The waters called me from the cliff top at sunset. I walked along the shore for half a mile or so, then found some handy rocks, stripped in their shelter, and swam out, far and fast, until the sun rose again, for me, behind the pine woods. As I swam back to shore I saw this house, for the first time. Later I found the zigzag path, climbed it, and stood upon the lawn. Twilight had fallen suddenly; a chill was in the air. I saw the fitful glow of firelight through the windows. The darkness came so quickly, I did not fear detection. I crossed the

lawn and stood on the veranda. I watched the three at play by the log fire. The room grew darker. I turned to go. Then you came in, and flashed all into light. I stayed —you bid me stay. And here I am. But I came to you, in the sunset, from the sea."

"I thought as much," she said. "'Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me.' Do you know Tennyson's great crowning poem? Will you repeat it as we stand here? It was so strongly in my mind as I watched the sunset. I think that was why I was so sure you would come to-night."

"Yes, I know the lines," he answered. "They have always held for me an extraordinary appeal. But how came you to be expecting me—to-night, or any night?"

"Repeat them. We have all the night for questions; but this moment will not come again."

She slipped her hand within his arm. He laid his own upon it and did as she asked. And, as he repeated Tennyson's noble lines, the tumult within his spirit ceased.

The stillness, all about them, was complete ; broken only by the music of his voice.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark ;
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

A long silence. Then : " I have no pilot," he said. " I drift rudderless. I am bound to make shipwreck on the bar."

She did not seem to hear his words. Her mind was far away. Her eyes were on the sea, gazing upon that path of shimmering light.

" Nigel," she said, " there *was* no farewell

—no farewell, belovèd ; but oh, the dark—the dark—the dark ! "

He wondered to whom she spoke. He tightened his hold upon her hand and stood silent.

" ' The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.' Each evening I stood here and said those words. If I could have added : ' Blessed be the Name of the Lord,' the darkness might have lightened. But I could not ; and it still was dark."

He asked himself what awful memory of sorrow brought that horror of anguish to her face. But the moment kept him silent. He could not speak.

" Oh, cruel sea ! " she moaned. " You took my All—my All."

She shivered, and he folded her wrap more closely around her.

Then she turned to him, and the look of anguish passed. There was gladness in her eyes.

" Come in," she said. " Let us come in ; and shut the door."

SCENE VII

"And After That—the Dark"

Scene VII

"AND AFTER THAT—THE DARK"

"NOW," said Lady Tintagel, as he put down his empty coffee-cup, "you may talk. There is no further need to wait."

"I want to tell you things from the beginning," he said. "Will it bore you if I begin at the beginning?"

"You could not bore me; and I would not miss one moment of the beginning. Tell me all."

"My name is Luke Sparrow, so named by the matron of the Foundlings' Institution to which I was carried when a month old, or thereabouts, by the arm of the Law. I began life on a doorstep—a suburban doorstep. I have never known home, or kith, or kin. Like Melchisedec of old, I am without father, without mother, without

descent; but there the resemblance ends; for Melchisedec was King of Salem, which is King of Peace, whereas I, from my infancy, have been possessed by a most restless demon. I was 'Returned Empty' and marked 'Glass with Care'——"

"Returned Empty?" There was horror in her voice. "What—what *do* you mean?"

"The label," he said; "the label pinned to the unwanted bundle had, printed in bold letters, on one side: RETURNED EMPTY, under which somebody who knew it, had written presumably, the date of my birth. On the other side was printed GLASS WITH CARE, beneath which the same careful person had taken the trouble to write a Bible reference, most explicitly explaining the exact value of the said bundle: *Luke xii.* 6. 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?' This apt quotation inspired the matron on christening Sunday, to bestow upon me the name of Luke Sparrow. She was a good woman and meant well. But

it was, ever after, a standing joke at the institution."

"Not one of them is forgotten before God," said Lady Tintagel.

"Yes, I know. But the close of the verse did not appear to be applicable, the bundle not containing a genuine sparrow, but merely a lonely little human child, 'Returned Empty.'"

"Returned?" she said; "Empty!" There was tragedy in her voice.

He laughed. "Yes; *very* empty—so the nurses said. Well, it was a bad beginning. The physical emptiness was soon remedied; but the mental and spiritual void remained unfilled. I've lived an utterly lonely life; and the misery of it was, I didn't seem able to accept companionship; I had no capacity for friendship, no wish for home-life. I have always been seeking, seeking, seeking for something I could not find. Lots of people wanted to be friendly; heaps of people tried to be kind; but I could not take their friendship, or accept their kind-

ness. To misquote a well-known saying, I was '*in* the world but not *of* the world.' And then I had a vice."

"A vice?" Her eyes, which never left his face, darkened with apprehension.

"Yes; a vice. Oh, not drink, or drugs, or other depravity. I have kept my body sane and clean, and without much effort either. I love the sea too well, and swim in it too often, for any form of moral squalor to have a chance."

"Squalor!" she exclaimed, with a fine disdain. "*You* would have had no need for squalor, you beautiful boy! All women must have loved you."

"Boy?" He laughed. "Good Lord! I was never a boy! I was born with a grown-up soul. Yes, they were kind; but I wanted none of their kindness. All women were to me mere shadows. Love never called to me."

"The vice?" she said. "What was it?"

"A mental thing. A morbid craving to look on at other people's joys; to view

them without sharing them; an absolute hunger to see home life, though I had none of my own. This led me to the low-down practice of prowling about after dark, peering in at lighted windows, like a lonely soul from another world, spying on bliss he might not share. I began it as quite a little chap, peeping and running away. The passion grew as I grew. When my day's work was over, I would walk miles to stalk unshuttered windows. Many a time I have narrowly escaped being run in as a probable burglar. Many a fright I have given to innocent people who looked up suddenly and surprised my uncanny face pressed against the glass. I know now what I was seeking. In some sub-conscious part of me I knew that somewhere in the world was a window through which I should look and see at last a room which should be HOME.

"So I prowled on. I was prowling to-night. But I never before wanted to be invited to enter. I preferred to be outside. And—until to-night—I never realised what

a low-down habit it was. To my morbid emptiness it seemed no wrong toward happy people, that I should just look upon their joys."

"But why to-night?"

"Ah, because all is different. You have done something to me; I don't know what, or why. Something in your sub-consciousness must have reached mine. You have burst the bars of my prison and set my spirit free. I shall leave here and go back to the world, a man among men. Hitherto I have felt—do you know the weird Schubert song?—a Doppelgänger. Good Lord, the horror of it! But you have broken the spell. I don't know how you did it. Perhaps it was because you asked me in."

"Why did you come in?" she whispered: "You, who always preferred to remain outside."

"Dare I tell you?" he asked. "Will you think it awful cheek? It was because—at last—at last—it was Home."

The woman on the couch opened wide her arms and leaned towards him with a movement of extraordinary tenderness. Her face was illumined by a radiance almost unearthly in its sublime joy.

"It *was* Home," she said. "It *is* Home. Ah, do you not remember, belovèd? Never call yourself Luke Sparrow again. Never call yourself a foundling—you, whom I have found at last! I can tell you your name, if there be still need to tell it: Nigel Guido Cardross Tintagel."

"What?" The blood leapt into his face. His outstretched hands almost met hers. "Are you—are *you*—my mother?"

"No, belovèd, no! Oh, Nigel, think again! Remember! You *must* remember!"

His hands clutched his knees. He looked full into her eyes; a long, steady gaze.

At last: "I remember nothing," he said. "You will have to tell me. I would to God you were my mother. But, if that may not be, then—in Heaven's name what are you to me?"

Her voice was a pæan of triumphant joy. "I am your wife."

The man in the chair sat before her, petrified. His hands gripped his knees. Twice he essayed to speak; but no sound would pass his lips.

At length: "Great God!" he said: "Am I mad, or are you?"

"Nigel," she said, "my dearest, you have come back to me. My boundless love, my desperate grief, my passionate prayers, have brought you back to me. My lover, my husband, my heart's dearest, try to remember!"

"I remember nothing," he said. "This is the madness of a strange wild dream. Presently I shall wake and find myself lying on golden bracken, while the dawn breaks in the east, and the stars pale in the sky. I have dreamed this dream before. I shall wake. It will mean losing you; but I *must* wake." He leapt to his feet and shouted the last words; "I *must* wake!"

"Hush, my dearest, hush!" She spoke as if soothing a startled child. "Sit down, and I will explain. I can make it all clear, if you will listen patiently. To you it is startling. But I have waited so long; I have known so long that you were coming. Sit down and listen. Striding about the room will not wake you, because this is no dream. It is blessed, blessed reality. Listen, Nigel! Listen, belovèd! I will make it all quite clear."

She rose, poured out a glass of wine and brought it to him.

"Drink this. How your hand shakes! . . . No; I will not touch you; but I beg of you to drink it."

She crossed the room, unlocked a bureau, took from it a despatch-box and placed it beside her on the couch.

"Now help me to tell you by listening calmly.

"We had three years of most perfect married life. No woman ever had such a lover, such a husband, as you were to me.

No man was ever so adored by his wife as you were by me. We were old enough to understand our happiness and to take it to the full. I was twenty-eight and you were thirty when I lost you; but you were so gloriously young, so full of life and love and laughter. I used to say you would never grow up. Sometimes I felt like wife and mother in one, my heart overflowing with the tenderness of both. Yet you were so wise and strong and grandly good. In all things spiritual and mental I leaned on you and learned of you.

"We had one little daughter, a year old on that fatal 12th of August; but, dear though she was to us both, you were my All. My whole body and soul were yours, wrapped up in you. And your love for me was such a sweet deep mystery of tenderness that I scarce dared think of it, save when you were near me. Surely it is given to few to love as we loved, to experience what we experienced.

"We lived much in the open; riding,

walking, climbing together. You were a magnificent swimmer and loved the sea. Often at dawn on a summer morning, you would leave our bed, dash down to the shore, and swim up the golden pathway, straight towards the rising sun.

"Our room is over this one. Our windows open on to a broad balcony running along the top of the veranda. There a powerful telescope is mounted.

"My heart always failed me over these early swims. You were so far from the shore, out in the ocean; no possible help at hand. I used to watch you through the telescope, and, knowing this, you would turn and smile and wave to me and speak my name. Often you dived into the bottomless deep of waters. Then your anxious wife could see nothing but an expanse of sky and ocean. After what seemed an hour of suspense, you would reappear in the sparkling ripples, laughing, shaking the salt water from your eyes, and bounding along with the strength and grace of a splendid

sea-lion. Then I would breathe again and slip back to bed as you neared the shore and I lost you under the lee of the cliffs.

"But when you came back to my arms, I used to hold you close to my beating heart and say: 'Oh, Nigel, my dearest! Some day those treacherous waters will swallow you up, and you will come back to me no more.'

"'I shall always come back to you, my sweet,' you would make answer. 'If I lay fifty fathoms deep, and *you* called, I should hear and come back.'

"Then you would quite suddenly fall asleep; but I would keep vigil, praying Heaven that you might never lie fifty fathoms deep, and loving the salt on my lips, as I softly kissed your damp hair.

"Nigel, do you remember?"

The man in the chair put out his hand, groping blindly for the glass, and moistened his lips before he made answer.

"I remember nothing," he said.

"One lovely August evening we sat together on the shore. It was our baby's

birthday. She was a year old. It had been a happy, merry day. We had been up to the nursery, where, surrounded by soft, furry toys, she slept. We stood together on either side of her crib, looking down at the rose-petal face with its aureola of tumbled golden hair.

"'Nothing of the Italian there,' you remarked. Your dark colouring and vivid vitality came from an Italian grandfather on your mother's side, from whom you also took your second name.

"'I want a little Guido, some day,' I whispered, as we turned away.

"'All in good time,' you answered, laughing softly, and slipped your arm through mine.

"We strolled down to the beach and watched a blood-red sunset.

"A sudden wind arose, gusty and fitful, blowing countless little white caps across the bay.

"A French woman, who, with her two daughters, had taken a hunting lodge near

by for the season, joined us on the beach. We found them pleasant neighbours, vivacious and amusing. Madame de Villebois had walked along the shore. '*Mes filles*' were out sailing, in their little '*barquette à voile*.' Presently it leapt into view, rounding the point; a pretty picture in the sunset glow.

"Seated upon the rocks just below this cliff, we watched the tiny skiff dancing and curtseying toward the middle of our bay.

"'Gusty for sailing,' you remarked; and the next moment we could see that they were in difficulties. The sails flapped loose, then bellied suddenly, and the boat lurched.

"'Oh, Sir Nigel,' cried madame, with clasped hands, 'bring out your rowing boat and go to help them!'

"'I'm awfully sorry,' you said; 'but the boat is under repairs.'

"At that instant the sail belched again; the girls stood up; the skiff heeled over, and they were flung into the water.

"Then followed a pandemonium of

screaming. Madame shrieked, and flew to the water's edge, crying: 'Sir Nigel, save them! Save them! *Oh, mon Dieu! Mes enfants!*'

"The girls screamed in the water, catching at the bottom of the upturned boat. They could swim enough just to keep their heads above water. Their shrieks of terror were appalling.

"You flung off your coat and dashed down the beach in your flannels.

"'Keep madame out of the sea, darling,' you shouted out to me, as I ran behind you. 'I will bring the girls in one at a time.'

"I put my arms round the frantic mother, and we stood together watching you.

"Even in such a moment, my heart thrilled at the sight of your magnificent swimming, as you forged through the waves at almost incredible speed. It did not occur to me to be afraid. Often, when I had misjudged my strength or been caught by the current, you had brought me safely to shore, swimming on your back with one arm

around me, while I lay on your chest in perfect security, hearing your voice close to my ear, saying: 'All right, my darling! We can't sink. Breathe, and rest, and trust yourself to me.' These slim French girls would be nothing compared with my height and weight.

"'He will save them easily, madame,' I said. 'Keep calm. He will bring them in, one at a time.'

"The frantic screams of the girls became more ear-piercing. I had never heard a sound so appalling.

"'Hold on!' you shouted. 'Hold on! I am coming! Hold on!'

"Just before you reached them, one lost her grip of the boat; it slipped away from her clinging fingers, and, turning, she swam and struggled towards you. In an instant you had her by the arm, holding her up.

"I remember wondering why she did not cease screaming. You were evidently

reasoning with her and trying to draw her on to your chest.

"At that moment the other girl left the boat, swam up behind you, and clasped you frantically round the throat.

"You let go of the first, in order to seize those throttling fingers; but she caught at your wrists and held them.

"Instantly you all went under, in a churning mass; then came to the surface—you fighting desperately—only to disappear again.

"Then, for one instant I saw a brown hand appear, pointing heavenward; a girl's white fingers locked around the wrist.

"Then that also vanished, and nothing remained, but the boat, drifting bottom upwards, and the fainting French woman in my arms.

"My Man, my Life, my All, lay drowning fathoms deep in the treacherous, cruel sea, while I stood helpless on the shore.

* * * * *

"When the precious body was recovered a week later, those gripping fingers had to be cut from throat and wrists, that it might lie alone in the graveyard on the hill. I was not allowed to see It; so my last memory of my Darling was that vision of him in his glorious strength, as he swam through the waters, with no thought of personal danger, shouting to the drowning girls: 'Hold on! I am coming!'

"And, when the chill waters of my own despair threatened to engulf me, I seemed to hear again those ringing tones: 'Hold on! I AM COMING!'

"Then something happened which gave them a new meaning, and awakened in my own mind a train of thought which surely saved my reason.

"Your will was found, leaving all you possessed to me, and with it a letter addressed: '*To my wife; for her eye alone.*'

"I had been so haunted by the remembrance of that right hand, pointing skyward from the sea, and now I was to

receive a message, penned by those precious fingers, which should indeed point out a ray of hope in the black sky of my sunless future.

"Nigel, do you remember?"

The man in the chair slipped his brown hands into the pockets of his coat. He did not lift his eyes from the floor.

"I remember nothing," he said, very low.

"Then I must shew you your letter, which no eye save my own has ever seen."

She unlocked the despatch-box, took from it a small jewel-case, opened this with a gold key hanging from a chain around her wrist; then, from a sealed envelope drew some half-dozen sheets of closely written manuscript. Leaning forward, she held them toward him.

Slowly, with evident reluctance, the lean brown hand came out of the coat pocket.

He took them from her, and let his eyes rest on the first page.

There followed moments of tense silence.

The tall clock, in the corner of the room, ticked loudly.

Out seaward, a nightbird screeched.

An owl in the fir wood behind the house, hooted thrice.

The fire fell together, and shot up tongues of flame.

At last he lifted hunted eyes to her face.

"It is my handwriting," he said, "or something very like it. But it is dated August 12th, 1882, thirteen months before my birth."

"Read it," said Lady Tintagel.

"I cannot."

"You must."

She rose, placed a shaded electric lamp on the table at his elbow; then switched off all other lights.

Seated in the shadow on the couch, she watched the dark face, so fine in its stern intentness, bending over the paper; the strong, nervous hand waiting to turn each

page; the dark hair, from which no cropping could cut the curl.

"God in heaven," she sighed, "he has come back to me in answer to the insistence of my frantic prayer; but he has returned emptied of all memory. Oh, of Thine infinite mercy, let there rise in his mind the floodtide of remembrance."

Thus she prayed and yearned and hoped, while the man in the chair slowly read the letter, written, in his own handwriting, a year before his birth.

"*August* 12*th*, 1882.

"My own sweet Wife,

"You and I are so full of happy, buoyant life, that it seems a strange anomaly that I should sit down to write to you of death: we are so intimately one in heart and mind, so wedded in each moment of our perfect life together, that there seems no need to face the possibility of parting. Yet, lately, there has come to me a chill presentiment that, in the very middle of life and joy, a

sudden death may come with one swift stroke; that you and I, belovèd, counting on fifty blissful years together, may, in one fatal moment, be wrenched apart.

"So I have made my will, leaving everything to you. All is in order. Fergusson will manage the estate. Thomas and his wife can be wholly trusted in the house. I leave my wife in faithful hands.

"So much for outward things. But what can I say to comfort you, my Love, my Own, in the utter loneliness of heart and soul, which will, alas, be yours when you read this?

"Try to realise that we are not lost to one another.

> "'Nothing can untwine
> Thy life from mine.'

"We are eternally one, belovèd. Time is made up of uncertainties; not so Eternity. '*Lord, Thou hast been our Dwelling Place in all generations.*' When we pass out of Time, we just go home again to that safe

Dwelling Place. We are so safe in Eternity.

"And our love, yours and mine, being eternal, we shall find one another again. Don't think of me as dead. Think of me as more vividly alive than ever; yours still; always wholly, utterly yours.

"But my belovèd, however hard you find it to bear the sudden silence, however much you long for just one word, one sign—never turn to a spiritualistic medium, or to spiritualism in any form. I hold that thing to be a most damnable device of the Devil's for bamboozling the minds of men; leading stricken hearts to believe they are holding converse with their Dead, when, in reality, demons intervene and whisper foolish nothings, till they trap the soul, confuse the mind, and wreck the moral and spiritual life. *Better a holy silence, than a lying whisper.* Better a parting bravely borne in faith and patience, than an attempt to bridge the chasm by forbidden means.

"Yet we *may* meet again on earth, if it be God's will for us, before we spend our

great Eternity together. We have often talked of this. You know how firmly we believe that we have met before, in other times, in other climes; that we have lived and loved, striven together, risen together to God's great purposes of fresh development. We may yet meet again in Time; find each other, know each other; 'rise, on stepping-stones of our dead selves, to higher things.' Many adventures into Time may be necessary to our full completion for Eternity. Remember all we have said of this subject, and do not think of Death as the end. It is but passing on to fuller life, to fresh beginnings, to greater opportunities.

"Of course we must bear in mind that all this is necessarily speculative. We cannot dogmatise upon uncertainties. Ideas of our own concerning the future state can be but theoretical. The only certainties are to be found in Divine revelation, and our theories, if they are worth anything, will harmonise with the Word of God.

"However, two great certainties I leave you to cling to in your loneliness:—Our eternal Dwelling Place is in the love of God; and our own perfect love remains to us eternally. Wherever I may be while you read this, I am loving you still, with my whole being; I am all your own, and I hold you mine for ever.

"Now I will lock away this letter with my will and other papers. Please God, it may be fifty years before your dear eyes rest upon it. The fact that I have written it, lifts me from the dull weight of vague apprehension.

"As I sit writing in the Oak Room, you lie in our chamber overhead, with our little one in your arms. Your precious life has been spared, and a new life has been given. Heaviness endured for a night, but joy came in the morning. You have come safely through this dreaded ordeal. Why should I apprehend an unknown danger?

"So I will put away all apprehension

with this letter, and go up to the radiance of your smile and the glad certainty which is mine when I clasp you closely in my arms, my wife, my own!

"Your lover and your husband, in Time and in Eternity, "NIGEL TINTAGEL."

He folded the many sheets and returned them to the envelope.

A strange calm had entered into his soul, a quiet strength which seemed to say: "Knowing so much, I must know more; I must know all."

He ceased to feel hunted and haunted. He had been brought face to face, in these pages, with a great love; whether his own or another's seemed at that moment scarcely to matter. The very knowledge of such a love lifted him to a higher plane. Luke Sparrow had seen deep into the most sacred recesses of the heart of Nigel Tintagel. His own empty heart received this as a trust. A patient strength replaced his restive horror of resentment

at a situation so utterly beyond all human understanding.

He laid the letter on the table beside him, switched off the light, turned his chair so that he looked into the fire, and did not face the woman on the couch, and said, very gently : " What happened next ? "

" Nigel," she said : " Do you remember ? "

" I remember nothing," he answered ; but the harshness was gone from his voice : its tone was infinitely sad and tender. " I remember nothing. But I am ready to listen. I want you to tell me all. I will try to understand. You need not fear any wild outbursts now. For the sake of what you believe—whether it be true or not—I would give my life to bring you comfort. Tell me all."

The firelight flickered on the tragic face. She saw a look of peace it had not held before. She saw a faint suggestion of the look of youth which, in its appeal to her tenderness, had made the man she loved so adorable.

"Oh, Nigel," she whispered; "Nigel, belovèd!"

"What happened next?"

"I read your letter many times. Your arms seemed to steal around me as I read. I turned my face against your breast, and wept myself to calmness. It mattered not that my head was buried in my pillow. Your letter had brought you so near; you came between me and all outward things. I repeated again and again: 'Nothing can untwine my life from thine.'

"The warning against spiritualism reached me just in time. The poor French 'Madame' was an ardent spiritualist. She had secured a medium, and was already in communication with her daughters. They had told her their favourite flowers and had reminded her that they used to prefer '*Chocolat*' to '*café au lait*,' for breakfast. Also that 'Antoinette' used to darn their stockings. Antoinette was an old '*bonne*' who had been with them many years.

"These undeniable facts filled 'Madame'

with a holy rapture. She implored me to come and receive like comfort. I might have yielded, had it not been for your timely warning.

"Madame's husband, sons, another daughter and two cousins, had come to her in her sorrow. She was quickly growing resigned—comforted—almost elated. Her 'deuil' was infinitely becoming.

"But I? I had been robbed of my All. I dreaded Madame de Villebois' frequent visits, yet knew my darling would not wish me to refuse to see her, lest she should think I resented the awful part her children had played in my life's tragedy. And, after all, it was Madame's outpourings which first caused the Great Idea to formulate in my mind.

"'Ah,' she cried one day, 'the brave, the wonderful Sir Nigel! So full of "*joie de vivre*"! So life abounding! No; he cannot stay *parmi les morts*. Such as he, must live again. . . . Quite soon, quite soon, he will live again. *Il reviendra!*'

"'Quite soon? Quite soon?' I repeated the words, when my visitor had departed. *Quite soon!* Ah, what would it be to know that my darling was on earth again; breathing the same air; seeing the same sunshine. Oh, if he came back *quite soon!*

"I remembered all you had thought and said on this great subject. You took the Bible instance of the prophet Elijah reappearing in John the Baptist—'*More* than a prophet' because a prophet twice born—as giving important data from which to draw conclusions.

"Christ Himself had said, in unmistakable language: 'If ye will receive it, this *is* Elijah which was for to come. . . . *And they knew him not*, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.' These clear statements, you said, swept away all possibility of explaining John the Baptist as a mere type of Elijah. He was, without doubt, a reincarnation of the great prophet of fire. Elijah caught away on the banks of the river Jordan, his mission incomplete,

reappearing on the same spot more than eight centuries later, to continue his work of 'turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.'

"It would take too long were I to endeavour to remind you of the perfect working out of every detail in the wonderful, inspired story—the comparatively slight stress laid upon the preparation of the little earthly body, miraculous though it was; the thirty years of silence and mystery in the deserts; then the triumphant heralding of the full-grown prophet: 'There was a man, *sent from God*, whose name was John': his very appearance exactly corresponding to the Old Testament descriptions of Elijah.

"You held that, though the actual physical body of a child is prepared by his parents, according to nature's laws, his spirit—his *ego*—comes direct from God, entering the body at the moment of birth, with the first independent breath the baby draws. 'God breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.' This followed the forming of the body. 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it.' You cannot *return* to a place, unless you have been there before.

"From this you argued that, though a certain amount of likeness to the parents might be inherited, the *ego*, being the essential part, would mould the body into the appearance it had worn before. A strongly developed spirit, rich with many former experiences, would probably stamp its own likeness so strongly on the bodily development that very little resemblance to the immediate parents would obtain. This is why, in brilliant, gifted children we see so little family likeness ; whereas in families in which all are as alike as peas in a pod, you find a lack of gifts, a poverty of mental development, a want of originality, which point to no previous experiences. Having no individual *ego* of its own, the

newly created spirit in its first existence, allows the body to become an exact copy of its parents. 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.'

"With all reverence, you regarded the incarnation of our Blessed Lord as throwing important light upon this point. From all eternity He had had an outward form. Man was created in His image. He was the pattern from which man was fashioned. In Old Testament records we find that He appeared many times upon earth and was seen of men: to Adam, to Abraham, to Joshua, to Gideon, to Manoah, to Daniel. These all knew Him, as we say in human parlance, by sight. The hosts of heaven knew Him and adored Him in His divinely glorious outward form. Now comes the time when He is to lay aside that glory and be born, very man, of the substance of an earthly mother. The little body, stainless and sinless, is prepared of a pure virgin through the operation of the Holy Ghost. 'A body hast Thou prepared for

me.' At the moment of its birth, the great *ego* of the Son of God enters into it. Then 'When He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him'—the scene on Bethlehem's hills. By degrees that body grows, moulded by the *ego* within, into the perfect likeness of what a body must ever be, indwelt by the great *Ego*—the Son of God. He is seen by angels, and recognised. He is seen by demons, and recognised. He is seen by Moses and Elijah on the holy mount and, undoubtedly, recognised. Then—the work of redemption accomplished—raised from the grave and glorified, He takes that same body, bearing the actual scars of crucifixion, back into the Heavens. Would their King return to them in wholly different guise?

"No; the *ego*, in its changeless consistency, has done its perfect work. Whether 'in the beginning, with God,' or born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem's stable, or ascending triumphant 'far above all princi-

pality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come'—He is, in outward appearance, as well as in nature and character, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"From these sacred facts you deduced that any reincarnation of a fully developed *ego* would probably reproduce again the likeness to its previous bodily appearance, modified to a certain extent by a diversity of parents, less or more, according to the strength and richness of the *ego*.

"From this it follows that if one lived who still held the conscious recollection of a person in one incarnation, and if a second incarnation followed so quickly that a meeting on this earth could take place between the newly-arrived and the one who remembered, there would probably be recognition on the part of the latter.

"You also believed that the handwriting, with certain modifications, would be the

same; handwriting being so closely allied to character, when allowed free development.

"You believed that the sub-conscious mind is an eternal thing, and holds stored within it every detail of every episode in every incarnation, be they many or few. But the conscious mind and memory, being dependent upon the growth and development of the actual physical brain, knows and remembers the happenings of that body's life, only. The sub-conscious mind cannot be drawn upon consciously; but sometimes there springs up from it, into the conscious mind, a haunting memory of previous existence: 'I have been there before! I have done this before!'

"Love being so largely a matter of the sub-consciousness, lovers are quick to find and to recognise one another, when they meet again reincarnate. This accounts for the sudden instinctive attraction known as 'love at first sight.' It is, in reality, two faithful lovers hailing one another with joy

and delight by the unconscious means of the sub-conscious memory. After marriage this sub-conscious memory may become an exquisite certainty, adding a richness to the bliss of newly-wedded love.

" Great gifts can also be handed up to the new body from the sub-conscious *ego*. A born musician is one who, having became a great musician before by means of long study and practice, is re-born rich in the possession of the gift of musical expression. A born orator has been a practised speaker in a former life, and now, without knowing that he does so, draws freely on his sub-consciousness for inspiration.

" *Genius* is the natural intellect so attuned to the sub-conscious mind that its fount of inspiration flows through it unhindered.

" *Madness* is the sub-conscious mind gaining undue control, bursting the dams of reason and restraint, and carrying all before it into mental chaos. A writer who, discovering that he can do more vividly imaginative work when his sub-consciousness

is in the ascendency, puts himself under the influence of drugs in order to obtain this mental condition, may, for a time, produce work which will astonish the world; but, before long, there will come the inevitable fiasco—loss of will power, loss of mental and moral perspective; nerve and brain irritation; insanity!

"Ah, how crudely and disjointedly I am repeating all this! It was your favourite subject, and I might give you essays of your own to read, with chapter and verse, and carefully worked out illustration. I have them all here. I almost know them by heart. But this hurried outline must serve to remind us of all you held and believed.

"Well—to take up the thread of the happenings of those sad days—first, your letter; secondly, Madame de Villebois' remark; thirdly, my recollection of all you had taught and told me, awakened in me the passionate desire that your rebirth into the world should take place at once.

In my awful loss and loneliness it seemed to me that such unspeakable comfort would come from the knowledge that my belovèd was actually on earth again; even if, at first, he were but a little helpless babe.

"I had always loved the photographs of my baby Nigel so tenderly—I seemed to have known and loved you at every age. At times I saw each age in you and adored it as I saw it.

"And the years would pass, and you would grow up. After all, when you were a man of twenty, I should only be forty-eight. We should certainly have found each other by then, and my darling would know me, and would not think me old, for had he not written: 'Wherever I may be I am loving you still, with my whole being. I am all your own, and I hold you mine for ever. . . . We *may* meet again on earth, if it be God's will for us.' I knew you meant by this, a fresh incarnation for both; but I could not see why I must wait during long, lonely years, or why death must come first.

"I began to pray with desperate, frantic energy that my darling might come back without delay.

"A wild, sweet joy and comfort came to soothe my agony.

"I walked along the shore and prayed aloud. I roamed the moors in paroxysms of petition. I prayed all night. I thought of the many little bodies there must be, prepared and ready, just waiting for a splendid, eager spirit to enter them at the moment of birth. Could not my darling be sent to one of these and, growing up in it to his full beauty and stature, come and find his wife again?

"At last, one night, I remembered that morning when you came in from a swim at sunrise, when I had been so fearful for your safety, and how I had said: 'Oh, Nigel, my dearest! Some day those treacherous waters will swallow you up, and you will come back to me no more.' But you, lying in my arms, had made answer: 'I shall always come back to you, my sweet.

If I lay fifty fathoms deep and *you* called, I should hear and come back.'

"I remembered this, just before midnight, on the 11th of September.

"I had begun to feel as if all my prayers and pleadings with heaven had been useless, had failed to obtain any response.

"Now, I would take my husband at his word, and call him—call him—call him!

"I slipped from my bed, opened the French window and went out on to the balcony.

"There stood the telescope through which I used to watch you while you swam!

"A high wind blew, warm but boisterous.

"The sea roared and pounded against the rocks at the base of the cliff.

"I stood in the wind-swept darkness and lifted my eyes to the distant stars.

"'Nigel!' I called aloud: 'Oh, Nigel, my lover, my husband, come back to earth! Come out of Eternity, back into Time. I cannot *live* on this earth without you. You promised—you *promised* to come from fifty

fathoms deep, if I called. NIGEL! COME! Ask to be born once more. Then grow up quickly, and seek, and seek, and seek, belovèd, until you find me. Nigel, your own wife calls! Oh, Nigel! COME!'

"Long I stood with clasped hands, gazing upward to the stars.

"The wind moaned and shrieked through the pines. The sea roared in the distance. Behind the house, an owl hooted, like a lost soul in agony, and seemed to mock my prayer.

"Up on the hill, the church bell tolled thrice.

"Suddenly an intense drowsiness overcame me—I, who for a month past had scarcely slept. I crept back to bed and fell asleep as my head touched the pillow.

"I slept until ten o'clock the next morning, then woke with such a sense of comfort and joy, that I could not understand what had happened.

"Then I remembered my call to you at midnight. And then I knew—knew with

an unhesitating certainty—that my belovèd had kept his word; that some time between midnight and ten o'clock, on this 12th of September, 1883, he had come back, for my sake, and was now on earth once more, spending his first day as a little living, growing, beautiful man-child.

"Oh, the wonder of those hours! My breasts thrilled and ached with joy and longing. Ah, if I could but press his baby lips against them! The wife in me was merged in the wish that I could be his mother! I lived again. I smiled and laughed. For a long, weary month I had trailed about. I now ran up and down stairs. I lifted my arms to the sun and blessed him, as he rose in the heavens, because he was shining on my little boy. I tried to picture his nursery, his bassinet, his little gowns and flannels.

"My household evidently thought me demented; but I knew that this joy had saved my reason.

"During the next few days I scanned

with eager eyes the births column in the 'Times,' making a list of the names and addresses of all the parents who had had sons on the 12th of September.

"Oh, Nigel, Nigel! I little thought—a door-step! A deserted bundle! A Foundlings' Institution! Oh, my dear, if I could have flown to that doorstep and found you, and brought you home! But—did you not say there was a date on the label, the date of your birth, written beneath 'Returned Empty'?"

"Yes," he said. "You shall see the label. There is a date."

He drew his chair near to the couch, so that he could reach her hands with his own. He took the label from his pocket-book, and laid it upon her lap. She lifted it and, bending towards him, read it by the firelight.

RETURNED EMPTY

September 12*th*, 1883.

"Oh, Nigel," she said, "the day—the very day!"

"I know," he answered. "I was listening for it as you talked. I felt it would come."

"And it is to-day," she said. "To-day! This is your thirtieth birthday."

He looked at her with a wistful smile; a smile of such pathetic melancholy that it chilled her heart.

"It is," he said. "And nobody in the world knows it, save you and I."

She stretched out her hands.

He took them in his and held them firmly. They looked into each other's eyes in silence.

"Speak to me," she whispered.

"Not yet," he said. "You have more to tell. And it has always been my way to think long and steadily, and then to speak —and to speak to the point. You and I are facing an awful mystery; but at least we are facing it together."

Suddenly she felt herself before a judgment-seat.

"Oh, Nigel," she whispered, "I am afraid."

"You need not be," he answered, and bending laid his lips upon her hand. "I have read Nigel Tintagel's letter."

"And do you remember?"

"I remember nothing. But my soul is slowly struggling up into the light. After long years in outer darkness, at last I am finding the way home to God."

Again he laid his lips upon her hands; but they were cold as death, and her heart trembled.

"Tell me the rest," he said.

She steadied her voice with an effort.

"There is not much to tell. It has been a long, long time of seeking and waiting. I kept count of each year. I made little clothes of the right size, and gave them away. In the summers I went from one seaside place to another and roamed about the shore, seeking among the little boys who

shouted and played, rode donkeys, wielded their wooden spades, and made sand castles. I neglected my little daughter because I wanted only the boy who was doubly my own. Then I remembered she was yours, and flew back to make amends.

"When the right time came, I went to the public schools, Eton, Harrow, Marlborough, Rugby. I watched the sports; I saw the prize-givings. Crowds of fine British lads were there; but the face I sought was not among them.

"Later, I went to Oxford and Cambridge. I saw degrees conferred; I viewed the races. I went to Lord's; you had been keen on cricket. But you were not there.

"At last I knew your education must be over. You must have taken your place in the world—a man among men. Then I gave up my search, and waited here—just waited. Your room was always ready. I felt certain you would come to me at last.

"Eight years ago our daughter married.

Then I was left alone, and I was glad. Little Nigel was born, and he was *so* like you. But that was no comfort to me; it was you I wanted, not a likeness. I never doubted that you would find me at last.

"And to-night—to-night, after thirty years—I looked up and saw my husband's eyes gazing in at me through the window.

"The very greatness of the moment kept me calm. I had just to make sure you would not go. I could not tell Colin and Eva; they would have thought me mad. But old Thomas knew. He recognised you at once."

"Recognised me?"

"Yes, Nigel. He had known and loved and served you from boyhood. He ran beside your pony the first time you rode alone. He and his wife are the only people left among the household who remember you. When I sent him to fetch you in, I told him you had come at last, and warned him to give no sign of recognition until I had found out how much you knew.

He has shared with me the long years of vigil."

Luke Sparrow buried his face in his hands.

"Good God," he muttered; "let me keep my reason."

Midnight sounded slowly from a distant belfry.

The old clock in the corner whirred its warning, and struck the hour.

Lady Tintagel took up her jewel-case.

"Come and sit here beside me, and see why Thomas could not fail to know you."

He rose. His knees shook. He felt queer and dizzy. It had been a long time of mental strain.

Lady Tintagel turned on a light behind her, and moved the despatch-box.

He took his seat beside her on the couch.

A packet of faded photographs were in her hands.

"This is your first. Your mother gave it to me; my baby Nigel; six months old. She used to call you her little Black Prince

because of your dark eyes and regal bearing."

He took the faded picture and bent over it.

The bright eyes of the baby had survived the yellowing process of sixty years. They held a look of baby omniscience as they stared into the haunted eyes of the man who bent and looked. The little figure sat erect, one finger lifted as if solemnly pointing a moral. The mother, on whose lap the baby sat, was so much absorbed in watching its expression, that her back was turned. He could only see a gracious figure and smoothly braided hair.

"Aged three," said Lady Tintagel, passing another.

The same bright eyes, now merry with childish laughter, and half hidden in a mass of tumbled curls. Bare legs, white socks, strap shoes, a wooden horse. The marvel was that he stayed still ten seconds to be photographed. He must have whooped and run, the moment it was over.

"Aged seven," said Lady Tintagel. "I love him in his kilt."

A graceful little figure, in full Highland dress; standing, as if just arrested in a dance, one hand above his head; his dark eyes shining, his curls escaping from the Glengarry bonnet.

The man's hand shook as he laid it down.

"No more just now," he said, thickly. "I don't see—very clearly."

"Just the last," she insisted, "the last of all; that you may understand how it was that Thomas knew you."

She drew out a cabinet portrait and placed it in his hands. Beneath it was written: "*Nigel, one week before I lost him. August*, 1883."

A man in flannels, carrying a pair of sculls over his shoulder; smiling that he should be caught by a photographer on his way to the boats; his whole face and figure radiating health and happiness: a look of well-being, of honest, genial love to all

mankind; of innate goodness, purity, strength—a man made for love and for companionship; a man to whom a woman would trust herself, body and soul, and never regret it.

No contrast could have been more marked than that between the man portrayed and the man who now looked at the portrait; but the contrast was one of heart, mind, character, not of outward semblance. For, as he looked, seeing only the portrait, in a room growing suddenly black, he knew he looked upon himself—himself, as he might have been; himself, as he once was.

Lady Tintagel returned the others to their place of safety. She fitted them all in with loving care; then turned to take the last.

"Can you wonder——" she began: then paused, dismayed.

The man beside her tried to rise, groped blindly for support, then swayed slowly forward, and fell senseless at her feet.

SCENE VIII

The Dawn Breaks

Scene VIII

THE DAWN BREAKS

WHEN consciousness returned, he found himself stretched at full length upon the couch.

Lady Tintagel knelt beside him, her arms around him.

He could feel the rapid beating of her heart; her soft, quick breathing, mingled with kisses, on his brow and hair. Words of tenderness unthinkable poured from her lips.

He woke at once to vivid consciousness; but lay with eyes closed, waiting till he could gather up his strength, master himself, and take hold on calm speech.

And all the while her flood of tenderness poured over him. It was as if his helplessness had broken down all barriers, his loss of consciousness had burst the

bonds of her reserve. The love and longing of those thirty years throbbed in her clasping arms.

"My Love, my own! Don't go from me again. Ah, when you wake you will remember all! Nigel, you will remember."

She held him closer to her breast. He felt the desperate strength in those poor clinging arms.

"Dear God, when he awakes he will remember! He will call his own wife by her name. He will know all at last. At last he will remember."

Her tears and kisses rained upon his face.

At length he spoke.

"Loose me," he said.

"Mine," she murmured, her trembling lips against his hair. "Mine again, at last. I have waited so long—so long."

He shrank away from her.

"Loose me," he said, "loose me and let me go. I do not want to hurt you."

"You could not hurt me, Nigel. I am

past being hurt. My love would welcome pain." Yet her lips quivered. Her eyes searched his. No answering light of love was in their sombre depths.

"You would loose me at once," he said, "if you could know how much I loathe that you should hold and touch me."

Her arms fell away from him. She pressed her hands against her breasts, as if his words had been an actual blow. She recoiled from him, moving backwards on her knees, gazing at him in dumb dismay; then hid her stricken face in both her hands.

He sprang to his feet, crossed to the window, and flung aside a curtain.

Dawn was breaking in one pale silver streak on the horizon.

Sea birds called to one another in the distance.

A chill mist lay on the lawns. In the corner of the veranda he could see the ghostly outline of the chair in which he had waited the night before.

He turned back into the lighted room.

The fire burned low. He stirred the embers and threw on fresh logs.

He raised Lady Tintagel from her knees and led her to the couch.

"Forgive me," he said. "How I hate to give you pain! But our only hope is to be absolutely honest with ourselves and with each other."

She lifted sorrowful eyes, but made no answer.

"Will you forgive me if that which I must say is hard to hear? It would help me if you could say: 'I will forgive you.'"

Her smile was sadder far than tears.

"We never forgave one another, Nigel. If need for forgiveness arose, love had already met it, and swept it away. Besides, I do not blame you for my pain. Say what you will."

He stood long silent, looking into the heart of the red embers.

At last he spoke.

"It is dangerous work," he said, "to

tamper with the Dead. The Dead are safe with God, at home in that eternal Dwelling Place. Do you realise the awful wrong you did to me and to yourself, by that insistent call which brought me back? Through all these years in the great Life beyond, the fulness of my love would have been yours. That letter told you of a changeless tie—you mine, I yours, for ever. But it also spoke of a parting bravely borne, in faith and patience. A sorrow thus endured would have kept us both safe in the Will of God. But you called me back, with passionate insistence, and—it seems—I responded to the passion of that appeal, and came. But in so doing I put myself outside the supreme Will. Had I waited God's time for my return to earthly life, I might have come strong in His strength and grace, filled with His Holy Spirit, ready to overcome, to rise at His command to a higher level than I had before attained. Instead of which I am but a poor derelict, shipwrecked upon life's ocean, drifting

rudderless at the mercy of each wind of circumstance. And alas, I returned empty —emptied of that Spark Divine, which is the very essence of the life of man; emptied of aspiration; emptied of the capacity for love. I have no assurance of the Love of God; I have no remembrance of my love for you; I have no power to feel love for others or to accept love offered me. For thirty wasted years I have been seeking, seeking, ever seeking, for earthly love, and now that I have found it, it is Dead Sea fruit—mere dust and ashes. I wander, God forsaken, like the demons of old, 'walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none.' I have no faith, I have no hope; I ask only for Oblivion. 'Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?' You who call yourself my loving wife?

"One sentence in that letter which you say is my own, wakes in me a realisation of all that I have lost. 'Lord Thou hast been our Dwelling Place in all generations.' My soul remembers that divine security;

but I have left it, and there is no return. You thought, while I lay senseless I should remember things of Time. Not so, but in a lightning flash of revelation I saw again Eternity."

Turning, he raised both arms, lifting his face with a light upon it which was not the dawn, nor any earthly light, but a pale reflection of the light of Heaven.

"God's Will!" he said. "When we go home to that great Dwelling Place, our holy passion is to do His Will. All earthly things—loves, hopes, desires—assume their right proportions. The one Essential is the great Will of God—that He in us, by us, through us, may in all things be glorified. All, in our earthly lives, which made for this, abides, and is ours still. All else is dross and cannot stand the fire—that purity of motive which is the very birthright of each immortal soul set free from earthly trammels of the flesh. To know His will and do it—this is Life Eternal; this is the joy supreme."

His arms dropped. The light faded from his countenance.

"I left it, at the call of earthly love. I stand before you empty, godless, damned."

"Nigel," she said; "my heart is broken."

"I would I had a heart to break," he said.

The despair in her face left him cold. Yet still her faithful love caught at a straw of comfort.

"At least we are together in our misery."

"I am going," he said.

"Nigel! You will not leave me?"

"How can I stay? A year younger than your own daughter, I cannot stand in my rightful place—nor would I, if I could."

"Nigel, stay as my son."

"How can I? I am not your son, and I will not be a rich woman's protégé. I may have no capacity for love, but I have honour. I shall go, as I came, empty and alone. I will take nothing with me from

this great house which you tell me is, in reality, my own."

"Nigel, there is one thing you *must* take with you. It was your tenderest gift to me. It has been so precious all these years; but now I have forfeited the right to wear it."

She drew her wedding-ring from her finger.

"I have failed you, utterly."

She held it out to him.

"The golden circlet, emblem of a love which is eternal, would mock me in my hopeless desolation. Take it, Nigel. It is all you can do for me. When you placed it on my finger, you had just said: 'Till death us do part'; and death has parted us."

"Not death," he said. "Life has parted us, not death."

A heavy sense of sorrow and compunction gripped him.

"Why do you ask me to do this? It leaves you neither wife nor widow."

"I *am* neither wife nor widow. I am not your widow, for you live. I am not your wife, for you loathe me, and are leaving me for ever."

"I do not loathe you," he said, in low, remorseful tones. "But you have shewn me what I was; and you have made me what I am."

A spasm of deathly agony wrung her heart. Could he not spare her one cruel stab?

She pressed the ring upon him.

"Take it, I implore you. And if ever the remembrance returns of all that this ring once meant to us, come back to me, and place it again upon my hand."

He took it. For what had it stood when last he held it in his hand? The complete possession of a perfect love?

He slipped it on to his little finger.

His gnawing misery grew. Why could he not say one word of kindness or of comfort to this stricken woman whose faithful heart was breaking?

His hell was within him, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

He rose abruptly. "I must go!" he said.

He crossed to the garden door and flung it wide.

A stream of golden sunshine poured in, paling the artificial light, and flooding the room with radiance.

The sun had risen, a great golden ball, above the sea, and was slowly ascending from the pearly mist on the horizon.

"I must go," he said, again; but a dreamy quality had come into his voice, and he leaned against the door post, gazing at the sunrise.

She came and stood beside him, and together they looked up to the rosy sky, flecked with soft billowy clouds of pearly whiteness, and down on the wide expanse of opal sea, reflecting in a royal highway from shore to horizon, the crimson glory of the rising sun.

The water seemed to shout, once more, in a silent chorus of sparkling voices: "This is the way to the City of Gold! Leap from the cliff! Take to the waters! This—and this only—is your road for Home."

Suddenly a look of hope shone in his eyes. His whole figure sprang to alertness. He was transformed.

"I must go!" he cried. "There lies the way." He pointed to the sparkling path upon the waters. "It is my only chance; my one way Home."

"Not that, Nigel! Oh, not that!" Her clinging hands caught at his coat. "You always said those who did that would lose——"

"Lose?" he shouted. "What have I to lose? Returned empty! I have nothing to lose."

He wrenched himself free from her detaining fingers. He gave no backward

glance. He sped across the lawn, like a hound loosed from the leash ; leapt the iron gate, and disappeared down the zigzag path leading to the beach.

SCENE IX

The Watcher

Scene IX

THE WATCHER

LADY TINTAGEL turned back into the Oak Room, switched off the pale lights, gathered up her treasures, locked the despatch-box, and, taking it with her, crossed the hall and slowly mounted the stairs to her bedroom. Each step meant a separate effort. The mainspring of her life was broken. This was the end.

Arrived at her room, she slipped off her velvet gown, put on a soft white wrapper, and laid herself down upon the bed.

"'They went away toward the sunrising,'" she quoted. "Where is it written?" She repeated it, mechanically. "'They went away toward the sunrising.'"

Then memory returned and with it the shock of realisation.

He had gone. He had gone for ever.

He was swimming into the sunrise, and never coming back.

Dear God—was there no hope, no help ?

She rose from the bed.

She must watch to the end.

She went out on to the wide balcony, overlooking the sea, where stood the telescope.

SCENE X

"Turns Again Home"

Scene X

"WHEN THAT WHICH DREW FROM OUT THE BOUNDLESS DEEP—TURNS AGAIN HOME"

WHEN Luke Sparrow reached the beach, he tore at his boot-laces, flung off his coat and, in less than twenty seconds, was swimming up the sunlit way, his eyes dazzled by the golden glory, his heart throbbing from his rapid race down the cliff.

He seemed to have burst invisible shackles which hitherto had held him captive.

"Free!" he shouted. "Free! On to the sunrise! No going back!"

Wild sea birds, flying above him, swooped and dipped, till their wings almost touched his face as they passed.

He laughed, and echoed their wild cries.

"God give me wings, that I may mount and rise!"

He dived into green depths where fishes flopped against his face, and waving arms of giant sea-weed tried to catch him as he passed.

He came to the surface gasping; dashed the water from his eyes; then settled into a steady breast-stroke, swimming out to sea, straight to the sun.

He swam. He swam. He swam. On, toward the shoreless horizon.

His heart pounded in his ears. Still he swam on.

His arms felt like lead. He folded them across his breast and swam without them.

His legs could move no more. He turned upon his back and lay, like a bit of driftwood, resting.

He grinned at the blue sky above him.

"Flotsam and jetson," he remarked confidentially to a swooping gull. "'Returned Empty. This side up, with care.' That's more to the point just now. Don't peck at my eyes, you greedy brute! Wait a week for that. . . . Here lies a poor derelict on

the ocean of Time, at the mercy of every wind of circumstance. . . . Swim, you fool! Yonder lies your one way Home."

He turned over, and swam on and on, into the dazzling glory.

At length a dream-like sense of unreality came over him, a strange, sweet peace; a wish to fall asleep.

He heard church bells in the distance, growing nearer.

At first he thought they came floating out to sea from the land he had left behind, and he ceased swimming that he might listen.

Then they pealed louder, coming up—up —from the green depths beneath him.

Come down and find us!
Come down and find us!

He looked down and instantly sank—deep, deep, deep into the cool silence. Instinctively he held his breath, threw up his hands and rose to the surface; gasped, took a long breath; raised his arms above his head and went down like a stone.

Deeper, deeper, deeper.

The church bells pealed so loudly, he thought their clanging clamour would burst the drums of his ears.

They lose their immortality
They lose their immortality
Those who do this
Those who do this
Those who do this
Those who do this
They lose their immortality

He was entangled in flapping sea-weed, but he fought himself free. It was very dark.

He threw up his arms and rose slowly to the surface.

The sun seemed miles above him, a pale phantom, luminous through the green waters.

It grew brighter. He reached the surface. It blazed upon him.

The church bells stopped suddenly. Everything stopped. His heart stopped. There was a great silence.

He was too tired to breathe. He clasped

his hands, lifted them slowly above his head, and went down for the third time.

As he sank he heard the head-master say: "Luke Sparrow—first prize"; he saw the glitter of the Mayor's grand chain. All his school life rushed backward through his mind, and then—he was flinging down a rattle on the nursery floor, and the matron's voice was saying: "Poor little 'Returned Empty.' He won't even play with his rattle."

"I'm really drowning now," he thought. "The fools are right. This is my past life."

"*What does he want?*" said the matron's voice. "*Who is he calling?*"

Then—something burst in his brain, and in flaming letters of living fire a name illumined the icy blackness.

"MIRIAM! My wife! Miriam, my love, my life! Good God, I can't leave her! . . . Miriam, I'm coming! Hold on, I am coming!"

The weeds had him this time, but he fought like a madman.

"Miriam! Belovèd!"

His lungs were bursting, but he kept out the water. Tons weight pressed down his hands, but he lifted them.

"Miriam, my Love, I am coming!"

The sun reappeared, a pale disc—no, by God! A dead face!

He was caught again. Sea-weed? No; white hands, catching at his throat, throttling him. Curse them! What matter they while his wife waits. He fought on.

"My Love, I am coming!" He broke free and rose—rose—rose.

The sun—Great God!—the air!

He breathed, choked, gasped, breathed again; lay on the surface, and panted. His ribs seemed jammed upon his heart; but, as he breathed, they lifted. His lungs expanded; his sight cleared; his heart beat more steadily.

"Oh, belovèd! Miriam! Miriam! Are you there? All else is a dream, save our great love, my perfect, perfect mate."

Slowly he turned and looked toward the shore.

Far away, so far away; but he could see the line of cliffs and the house—his home and hers—standing clear against the fir woods. The upper windows seemed on fire, as they reflected the gold of the sunrise.

He measured the distance between himself and the shore. Could he swim it?

He started a slow breast stroke, his eyes upon those flaming windows.

Then he remembered the telescope. He made out the balcony.

Dear God. Was she watching? Of course she was watching.

He fancied he could see a white figure.

He waved his arm and smiled. A glory of love was on his face.

"Miriam," he said, knowing the powerful lens brought him quite near and she would see him speak; "Miriam, you said I should remember all, if I remembered your name. And I do; oh, my belovèd, I do!"

As he swam the sunlight caught the wedding-ring—her wedding-ring—upon his finger. He missed a stroke to hold it up, then press it to his lips.

"I am coming, Sweet! I am coming!"

Then he swam on.

Love, surging through his soul, gave him strength.

The shore drew nearer. He could see her now, standing at the telescope.

"Miriam! Miriam!"

Her dear arms would be waiting. Her lips—her tenderness.

Could he last out? He swam feebly, but steadily.

As he neared the shore, a swiftly flowing current caught him. It held him stationary and his strength was ebbing.

One chance remained. He might win through under water. He took a deep breath, dived, and disappeared.

Swift, quick strokes—"Miriam! Miriam!" Desperate work; but for her dear sake!

He rose at last. He was through the

current and under the lee of the cliff. He could see the house no longer, but the zigzag path was there. His coat and his boots lay under the rocks.

He fought feebly with the water. His breath came in groans.

No; he could not do it, after all. Not another stroke. He must sink; he must give up, and sink.

He sank—and felt sand beneath his feet.

With a great cry he struggled through the water, reeled up the beach, and dropped like a log beside the rocks.

SCENE XI

"My Life for His!"

Scene XI

"MY LIFE FOR HIS!"

WHEN Lady Tintagel stepped out on to the balcony and took her stand beside the telescope, a deathly sense of faintness almost overcame her. She gripped the balustrade to keep herself from falling.

Gradually she revived in the fresh morning air.

Then she adjusted the telescope and focussed it on the dark head in the water.

The powerful lens brought the swimmer so near, that it seemed as if she had but to put out her hand to touch him.

He was swimming in direct line between herself and the rising sun. The water through which he moved, sparkled and glittered. She could see every strand of his

wet hair, her wedding-ring on his brown finger.

She marked the strong, quick strokes. Rapidly he put distance between himself and the shore. She had to keep adjusting the focus to hold him near.

"Oh God," she prayed, "do not let him do this thing. Do not let him drown. If a life must be given, my life for his. Oh, by the mercy of Christ, my life for his!"

She saw the wild birds swoop above him.

After a while he began to flag. She watched him fold his arms, turn upon his back, and lie, like a tired child, upon the bosom of the sparkling ocean.

Then she could see his face, ghastly in the sunlight. There was madness in it—madness.

"Oh God of infinite mercy! My punishment is greater than I can bear. I bow to Thy Divine Will. I give up my belovèd; I give him up, if need be, for all eternity; but save him from the doom of suicide. My life for his, O Lord, my life for his!"

He had turned, and was swimming on; but his movements were vague and uncertain. He clove the water feebly, pausing between each stroke and raising his head.

Suddenly he disappeared. The sparkling highway held no sign of him.

"Nigel!" she shrieked, "Nigel!"

The brown hands reappeared; the dark head rose out of the sea. But making no attempt to swim, he lifted his face to the sun, then raised his arms and went down again.

"O God, have mercy!"

Oh, mocking, vast expanse of gaily sparkling sea!

She held her breath and watched.

Ah! His hands again! His face—the eyes now wide and staring. He gasped; his chest heaved. He raised his head and shoulders out of the water; then slowly clasped his hands, lifted them above his head, and sank instantly.

She was silent in her agony; yet, speechless, her heart still cried to God.

"Save him! Save him! My soul for his! O God, my soul for his!"

O empty, sunlit sea.

The floor rocked and swayed beneath her feet. She clung to the telescope, striving to keep in view the rippling surface where last she had seen him.

No sign, no hope. This was the end.

An awful calmness held her. "Fifty fathoms deep," and this time no return. She and Despair must company together through all the years to come and after.

No! O God, his hands! And now his head, his heaving, gasping chest!

He fought and struck the water, then straightened out and lay upon his back, heaving, breathing; breathing, heaving; gasping with closed eyes; then quite still, resting; a weary child upon its mother's breast; a lover in the tender arms of his belovèd. The water rocked him gently. So near he seemed. She clung to the telescope speaking softly to him.

"Nigel, my dearest, God has heard my

prayer. Rest there, dear Heart. The arms of Eternal Love are beneath you. Oh, if the wish to live returns, you will be given strength to reach the shore. Heart of my heart, my life for yours; my *soul* for yours, if need be."

His eyes were open. He was gazing skyward. A look of ineffable joy and peace was on his face.

"Oh, what does he see? Visions of God? Promise of life and peace and joy restored? Or is he dying; dying there, before my eyes? Nigel, my own, what is it?"

Slowly he turned and looked toward the shore; then started swimming, a steady breast stroke, slow but sure.

Her trembling fingers adjusted the focus, keeping pace with him.

His eyes met hers. A glory of love was on his face. He waved his arm and smiled. His lips moved and formed a word.

Yes, it was her name!

"Miriam," he said; and again, "Miriam!"

"Oh, wonder beyond belief. He has

remembered and is coming back to me; coming back a second time from the dead; but this time God-sent, God-given."

She laughed softly and whispered tender words.

"Yes, darling, I know. Yes, your wife is here; just waiting here, as on those dear mornings long ago. . . . Swim carefully, my dearest boy. I do so dread the sea—so deep and treacherous. . . . Yes, I see the ring. . . . Oh, is that how you love me? No, don't stop to answer. . . . Nigel, it takes so long. . . . Are you exhausted, darling? Oh, turn again and rest. . . . Nigel, you make no progress. Oh, my God, he is swimming, but he is not moving! He is caught by the current! . . . Ah! . . . No! . . . Yes! He is gone!"

She flew into her room and pealed the bell. Then back to the balcony, shrieking wildly. So near the shore, but gone.

An empty sea; a cruel, sparkling, empty sea!

The sound of hurrying feet within. She

staggered back into the room, clutching at the window-frame and curtains.

"Quick, Thomas, quick! Sir Nigel—drowning—below the cliff—a boat—a rope——"

Then she fell forward on her face.

SCENE XII

The Deep Well

Scene XII

THE DEEP WELL

WHEN Luke Sparrow awoke from a long sleep, he found himself in bed, wrapped in softest blankets, in the room to which he had been taken on the previous evening.

His entire being was permeated by that extraordinary sense of comfort which accompanies returning strength after violent exertion. He had no desire to move, yet he lifted his right arm and looked with a perplexed smile at the sleeve of a blue silk sleeping suit. Then he saw the wedding-ring upon his finger.

"Miriam!"

He let a flood of tender memory sweep over him.

"Miriam! My wife."

Presently he looked round the room,

taking in every detail. It was familiar in a strange, double way. His conscious brain remembered each impression of the night before, when he thought it "Colin's" dressing-room; but a vague, dream-like memory, working slowly, like drawing water from the depths of a deep well, remembered it as his own.

He studied the engravings on the walls, seeing them consciously for the first time; but when he looked away, it seemed to him that he had known, before looking, that each would be in its place.

He looked along the row of books in the bookcase. His conscious mind mastered their titles; but, from the deep well of his subconsciousness he drew the knowledge of what, if he could open them, he would find written on the fly-leaves.

This experiment soon tired him. He lifted his hand again and fixed his mind upon the wedding-ring, and upon her whose ring it was.

Nothing vague here, nothing indefinite.

His love for her, his memory of her love, flowed through him like new wine. Her loveliness, her tenderness, her sweet fidelity.

He held the ring against his lips. "My bride"—what memories! "My wife, my perfect mate!"

To him, who had never loved, it came as an overwhelming wonder to find himself in sudden possession of a love full grown.

"Miriam! Miriam!"

Soon he would see her. She was somewhere quite near.

Oh, heart of gold, beating beneath the garment of soft woman's flesh!

He closed his eyes and gave himself up to the exquisite enchantment. The purity of each remembrance of her love and his, filled him with a sense of heavenly rapture.

"My perfect one; my Angel of Delight!"

The door opened softly. An elderly woman appeared, stout and matronly,

carrying a cup on a small tray. She advanced to the side of the bed.

He had never seen her before. He studied the kind, homely face, the neat black gown, the silk apron, the cairngorm brooch. Then from the depths of the well came up an intuition and, almost before he knew it, he had said: "Hullo, Mary."

The ruddy face paled. The hand holding the tray shook.

"Yes, Sir Nigel. We thought you might have wakened, Sir Nigel. I have made bold to bring you broth."

Broth? Yes, of course. Broth and Mary would go together. He sat up, took it from her hand, and supped it hungrily.

She watched him, with eyes which held a strange mingling of love, fear, and wonder. The love, a life-long fidelity. The fear came with the remembrance of a coffin beside which she had stood; of a grave in the churchyard on the hill side. The wonder was born of a mystery, unexplained,

unaccountable, but accepted with the simple faith of a mind ruled by the heart.

"How did I get here, Mary?"

"Thomas will tell you, Sir Nigel."

"You tell me. I like hearing your dear old voice."

"Thomas found you by the rocks, Sir Nigel. He fetched the foresters, and they brought you up on a hurdle."

"How did Thomas know I had been swimming?"

"Her ladyship gave the alarm."

"Ah! Who put me to bed?"

"Thomas and the doctor."

"The doctor! What doctor?"

"They fetched the doctor, Sir Nigel."

"I see. Thank you, Mary; the broth was very good. Now, where are my clothes? I want to get up."

"I will send Thomas, Sir Nigel."

Left alone, he pondered. What had they told this doctor? Would he also rise, a familiar figure, from the well of sub-conscious memory?

The door opened again. The old butler entered, closing it carefully behind him.

"Thomas, come here. I have been talking to Mary."

"So I hear, Sir Nigel."

"She tells me the foresters carried me up from the shore. Do they know me, Thomas?"

"No, Sir Nigel. They are young men, sons of Fergusson and Graem."

"I see. How about this doctor?"

"He has been her ladyship's medical attendant for a matter of twenty-five years, Sir Nigel."

"Twenty-five years? Ah! What did you say to him? How did you explain my presence here?"

"We told him you were an old friend of her ladyship's whom she had met abroad."

"Abroad?" He dived into the well. "Ah yes! That was true, wasn't it. Where——"

"Italy, Sir Nigel."

"Yes; Florence. Good Lord! What else did you tell the doctor?"

"That you dined here last evening, and spent the night; went for an early swim this morning, and got caught by the current."

"Good. Who else—er—remembers, beside you and Mary?"

"No one, Sir Nigel. We alone are left, of the old staff."

"Thomas, bring my clothes. I must get up."

"See the doctor first, Sir Nigel."

"No need. I am all right. There is but one person I want to see. Where is she, Thomas?"

"Her ladyship is in her room, Sir Nigel." The old man's face worked. "The doctor is with her ladyship."

"The doctor? What's up, Thomas? Is anything wrong?"

"Wrong? Wrong, Sir Nigel? Merciful God!" He wrung his hands helplessly. "It's best you should hear it from me, Sir Nigel. Our dear lady is dying. We thought she was gone when we found her. But the

doctor brought remedies in his bag. He revived her. She is conscious again, and knows us. But he says she can't last through the day."

He leapt from the bed.

"Quick! My clothes."

"For God's sake, sir, be calm! For her ladyship's sake; for all our sakes. It will seem like madness. Don't do aught that might disturb her peace. The country side will ring with it. They have talked for years. They will say she died insane."

"My clothes, Thomas."

"Those you came in are soaked with sea water, Sir Nigel. But we have plenty here. Her ladyship had them all kept ready, and always brushed and aired."

He went to a chest of drawers and fumbled blindly.

"Your flannels, Sir Nigel? She would like best to see you in what you wore that day. The coat you flung to her as you ran down the beach, she keeps in her own room. But here are all the others complete."

With trembling hands, he laid them on a chair. "All you need is here, Sir Nigel."

"Then leave me, Thomas. But come back in five minutes."

He dressed rapidly.

"Dying! My wife dying! She shall not die. By heaven, she shall not die!"

As he slipped on the coat, there came a quick rap on the door.

"Yes; come in! Now, Thomas——" Ah, the doctor. With an effort he pulled himself together. "Good morning."

"So you're up and dressed? I thought you would soon be all right when that stupor of exhaustion passed into natural sleep. You'll do. I did what I could for you, Mr.——"

"My name is Luke Sparrow."

"Ah, Mr. Sparrow. But my hands were full, from the first, with poor Lady Tintagel. Sad business, very. And the daughter and son-in-law went off motoring early this morning a four days' tour, leaving no address. Haven't traced them yet. Stupid

thing to do. Not that she wants them, poor lady. And the quieter she is, the better. But she is asking for you."

The little man jerked over to the window, and fussed with the blind cord.

"Is there any immediate danger?"

"Danger? My dear sir, she is dying, would have been dead now, had I not had powerful restoratives handy. She can't last out the day. Her heart has been dicky for years. Any shock might have done this. Thirty years ago her husband was drowned before her eyes—as you may have heard—down on this beach. A most devoted couple, so I'm told. Wrapped up, etc.; you know the sort of thing. The shock nearly killed her. Look at that wonderful white hair! It isn't age. It was as white as it is to-day, when they went to her the morning after he was drowned, and she only twenty-eight, and beautiful as a June morning. I came to these parts a couple of years later. Sad case! She recovered physically, bar the heart trouble!

but her mind has been touched on one point ever since. Always expecting him back. Sea give up its dead, I suppose. You know the kind of thing? I always say they should have let her see the corpse; might have cured her. But, after a week in the water! Not a pretty sight, you know. Acted for the best no doubt. Oh, she never speaks of it to me. But people talk you know; say she always keeps his room ready, and so forth. Mania, of course, but harmless, poor lady. Why do fine chaps such as he, throw away their lives for worthless young women; couldn't sail a boat; better drowned. Thousand pities. So she watches the sea and, I suppose, saw you in difficulties. Gave her a shock; brought back the scene. Thomas and his wife are very close; told me nothing. But her maid—nice girl—said she shrieked: 'Sir Nigel is drowning below the cliff; a boat! a rope!' Poor soul! Sane enough, now; but heart done for."

"May I see her?"

"Why not? She keeps asking for you, so Mrs. Thomas tells me. She will be gone at once, if she makes any effort or sits up. But she can't last out the day, and she may as well have what she wants and die happy, as die, three hours later, wanting it. I had a patient once who was dying; apparently nothing could save her; and she wanted to go out into her garden, lovely garden it was, too. Nurses and relations wouldn't hear of it. 'Why, doctor, it might kill her!' 'Good Lord,' said I, 'and if it does? Let her die in the garden, if she wishes. Isn't it a sweeter place to die in than her bed?' So they carried her out, and blest if she didn't rally from that hour and get well! Queer things, bodies! Well, I must be off. There's nothing further to be done here; and I've a baby on hand, waiting to enter the world, which is, after all, of more importance than a lady waiting to make her exit."

"Can nothing be done to relieve——"

"She is in no pain, and won't be. I will

be back in three hours. You will stay on, I suppose, and being an old friend, you can see to things, until these motorists are found. A shock for them, but they deserve it; going off and leaving no address! And between ourselves, they'll be pleased to come into the property and the money. They've not been much to her, nor she to them. She was what I called '*a one man* woman.' While she had him, because he filled her heart, it was open to all. But when she lost him, she lost her all, and her empty heart closed to others. That is why I curse those French girls; throttling that splendid fellow with their foolish fingers. Who wanted them? And at such a cost! Well, good-bye, for the present——"

"Can you not leave instructions as to what is to be done for Lady Tintagel?"

"The housekeeper has full instructions, and I have left stimulating draughts with her. Keep the patient quiet. Give her all she wants. Do, without question, everything she asks. Don't let more than one

person be in her room at the same time, unless help is needed. Don't attempt to move her. She lies where they put her at first, on a couch near the window, looking out over the sea. I wouldn't let them move her. It's such a silly fad always to want people to die in their beds. It rejoices my heart when I hear of a parson dying in the pulpit. Please God, I'll either die in my gig or on the links. Good morning, Mr. Sparrow. See you later on."

Silence at last.

He went over to the window, and leaned his forehead against the glass.

He must go to her now. She wanted him, and time was short. Thank God, he would have her alone. Surely Divine interposition had given them thus to each other. He must just wait until he could be sure that the noisy little man, who had filled the room with babel, was clear out of the house.

Mrs. Thomas tapped and entered.

"Her ladyship asks for you, Sir Nigel. She is alone."

"Shew me to her room, Mary," he said; but in the same moment, turning from her, walked across the room, drew back a curtain and found the door of communication behind it. He opened it. Double doors. Yes, of course. She had liked the absolute security of double doors to their own room.

One moment he waited, took a deep breath, laid firm hold upon himself; then opened the door, and passed into the quiet room beyond.

SCENE XIII

"Nevertheless——"

Scene XIII

"NEVERTHELESS——"

SHE lay upon the couch, near the open window, very white and still.

She was gazing out across the sea but, as he closed the door, she turned her eyes and watched him, while he walked over to the couch; and those patient eyes were so full of unutterable love and longing, that his throat closed on the words he had meant to say.

He knelt down beside her, took both her hands in his, and laid his lips upon them.

"Miriam! Miriam!"

"Nigel, you do remember?"

"Yes, my belovèd, my wife, my own—thank God, I do remember. And I love you with every fibre of my being."

He knew the time was short. There must be no delay.

He drew her wedding-ring from his finger, slipped it back to its rightful place, and laid his lips on ring and finger together.

"I love you utterly," he said, "and I hold you mine for ever."

"Nigel, my husband, this time it is I who go, and you who remain behind. You will be braver than I."

"My own," he answered, "we shall be together in the place where alone true joys are to be found; safe within the circle of the Will of God. Since I left you and went out into the sunrise, I, who before was empty, have become rich beyond all human comprehension in the possession of three different memories. I remember the thirty years of this present life. I remember the precious love which was ours in the life before, and, remembering that, my heart has grown so rich that I care not to remember aught else of that life, but just the utter sweetness of our wedded love. And,

best of all, it has been granted me to remember something of the wonder of that eternal Dwelling Place—that short while in Eternity, before our great love drew me back to Time—not in detail, but in its larger lines of truth."

"Ah, tell me that," she whispered. "I know the precious past. I know much of the present. Tell me of the Eternity between."

"God's love," he said, "is the great Dwelling Place; God's Will, the very air we breathe. The passionate desire of every soul, freed from the earthly prison of the flesh is to return that love, to do that Will. The Son of God, walking the earth as man—though emptied, for the time being, of His eternal memory—remembered this, and gave His fellow-men the perfect prayer: 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.' When that prayer finds its complete fulfilment, earth's hard perplexities will all be solved, earth's tears all wiped away. His perfect Will ensures man's

perfect joy. The next petition in the pattern prayer bears out this thought. 'Give us this day our daily bread.' What food is to the body, doing the Will of God is to the soul. He Who taught us thus to pray, was the one man who could say with absolute honesty: 'My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent me.'

"All souls know this by instinct. The sinner knows it in his sin, and fails to find in sin a lasting pleasure. The agnostic knows it in his search after something which can meet and satisfy the craving of his mind. The martyr knows it, and laughs at the cruel flame. The angels know it, and fly swiftly on strong wings. Christ knew it, in Gethsemane, and hushed the natural protest of His human agony, and summed up His life's purpose in those perfect words: 'Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done.' When the last rebel soul has yielded and understood, then the great End will come; God will be All in all."

He paused and laid his forehead upon her folded hands.

"My wife, our sacred love must stand this test. This is the fire which burns up all the dross, but leaves us, as eternal treasure the gold and precious stones.

"Just now I woke, filled with the rapture of our love, the joy, beyond all words, of having found you. Almost at once, I heard that I must lose you. My flesh cried out: 'I cannot let her go!' Then came the Angel of His love and pity, and laid a strengthening hand upon my soul, and said: 'This is God's will, His perfect way for her and you.' Belovèd, to that Will we both must bow. Thus shall we find our purest joy, and love which has no ending."

"Nigel," she whispered, "I brought you back empty, and I leave you desolate."

He waited till his voice was steady, then replied:

"Listen, sweet wife of mine! Our love has brought me Home. Through you there comes to me this chance to put myself once

more within the Will of God. Together we accept in faith and patience, this parting we are called upon to face, and thus atone for the mistaken past. Mine is the harder part, I know; but I would have it so. I left you to the harder part before. I shall be lonely, but not desolate. I owe a debt to life for thirty selfish, wasted years. If a great chance comes, I may pay it soon. That will be as God wills. But, be the parting long or short, always I shall know you watch and wait for me; and, thanks again to you, I shall not be earth-bound; for, where my Treasure is, there will my heart be also."

At last he lifted his head and looked at her.

Then his courage almost broke. That lovely face, so dear, so well-remembered. Those lips, parting in soft surrender. The tenderness his heart so hungered for, dwelling upon him in those dying eyes.

"Oh, I can't," he said, and hid his face against her breast. "My God, give us one

year! If it be possible, let this cup pass."

She laid her hands upon his head and held him close.

"'Nevertheless——'" she said: "Oh, Nigel, finish it!"

And, in a voice broken by sobs, he spoke the sacred words which make complete a brave soul's sacrifice.

SCENE XIV

"No Sadness of Farewell"

Scene XIV

"NO SADNESS OF FAREWELL"

THE hours which followed seemed to him the nearest approach to heaven a man could know on earth.

Sometimes she lay in his arms and gently slept; then roused herself to drink what Mary brought, and rallying a little, let her eyes dwell on his face, as he sat beside her in the sunshine, talking softly of many things—the past, the future; all their love had meant; would mean.

Deep peace enveloped them. Time stood still and waited while they drank deeply of a fount of love, slaking the thirst of years. Words could scarce carry the tender emotion of all they had to say to one another. Because of her great weakness, it was chiefly he who spoke and she who

listened. But sometimes she rallied, and uttered words which he knew he would carry in his heart for ever.

Twice he left her; when the doctor returned amazed to find her still alive, and so content; and when she sent for Thomas, to bid the faithful old man farewell, and to give him last instructions.

This time, when Luke returned, she beckoned to him anxiously.

"Nigel, all this is yours; the house, the property; all should be yours."

He smiled. "My dearest, no! Not this time. *You* are mine, and I want nothing more. I arrived with a knapsack; I shall depart with a knapsack. I am just a tramp, you know; but a happy tramp, with a kingdom in my heart."

"Nigel—one thing—you will not refuse? My despatch-box—full of letters—yours and mine; and the photographs. You will take that?"

"Yes, my belovèd, I gladly will."

"A few other things are in it—sacred to

us; a miniature you had done of me the year before—you went. And lately—I have kept—in a sealed envelope—a thousand pounds in bank notes, in case of just such an emergency as this. Nigel—you will? To please me? It is all yours, really. You might wish to go abroad—travel——"

He hesitated. "Miriam, I have all I need." Her eyes pleaded. "All right, my darling. The case and all that's in it. Your gift to me." He bent and kissed her fluttering fingers. "Don't be troubled, dear Heart. Such a perfect thought of yours. I will do beautiful things with it; things you would have liked to plan. They will be my own wife's gifts to me."

She smiled and closed her eyes, content.

At sunset he knew their one day was over.

He gave her the draught the doctor had left for a last emergency, and momentarily she revived.

Her eyes left his face, to gaze across the sea.

"'Sunset and evening star,'" she whispered, "'And one clear call for me.' Say it, Nigel."

His great love made him brave.

He repeated the lines, and the deep, sweet music of his voice, as it reached her, held no tremor. Only, he looked away across the sea; not at the dying face.

"'No sadness of farewell,'" she said. "Nigel, is that possible?"

Then he turned, smiling bravely.

"All is possible, my dearest, to a perfect love."

"Oh, raise me," she whispered, "and take me in your arms."

He held her close.

She lifted her face to his.

That look of love unspeakable, broke his iron self-control.

His tears fell on her face.

"I know!" she said, and suddenly her voice was strong and full. "My lover and my husband! But it is all joy—no sadness really. And such a little while——"

"All joy, my wife," he answered; then, bending, laid his lips on hers.

And in that perfect kiss, her spirit passed.

SCENE XV

"The Secrets of Our Hearts"

Scene XV

"THE SECRETS OF OUR HEARTS"

THE stranger from the inn stood with the mourners at the open grave, in the churchyard on the hillside.

The son and daughter glanced across, and wondered vaguely who he was, and why he stood so near.

Another coffin, hidden during thirty years, had seen the light that day; for the bricked grave had been so planned that two might lie within it, side by side.

Into the empty space they lowered the new coffin, with its bright silver fittings and polished wood, slipping it carefully into place beside the one which had rested there so long.

The mourners bent and looked into the grave, while the new coffin slowly passed

from view; but the stranger kept his eyes lifted to the tree tops. His quiet face, so striking in its dark beauty, shewed no signs of deep emotion; yet, to many there, he seemed to be chief mourner.

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, Who for our sins art justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not Thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.

As the handful of earth fell with a sudden thud upon the coffin, the stranger started, seemed to awake to the actualities

around him, took a step forward, and looked down into the grave.

Yes ; side by side they lay—the two. One looked very grand and new beside the other, though careful hands had polished that and made it passable, to face the light of day.

The inscription on the large brass plate was clearly legible, and left no doubt as to what lay beneath the lid.

NIGEL GUIDO CARDROSS TINTAGEL

Aged 30

Drowned August 12th, 1883

Greater love hath no man than this : that a man lay down his life for his friends.

While he pondered these words, in solemn awe and silence, there fell upon his ears the Church's triumphant promise of Life, which overcomes the grave ; of faith, which changes death to life eternal.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the resurrection and

the life; in Whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in Him, shall not die eternally. . . . We meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our sister doth——

"This our sister?" The shadow of a smile passed across the dark face, gazing so intently at the two coffins. How well he knew that the one, whatever its brass plate might say, held only a suit of clothes, spoilt by sea water, empty and done with. How easy it made it for him to realise that this new coffin, inscribed

MIRIAM TINTAGEL

also held naught save an empty gown—a very lovely robe, sacred and precious, because worn by her, but nothing more.

"Miriam, belovèd! Do you smile to see us standing here in our trappings of woe? Can you look back through that open door by which you passed into the radiance of

Eternity, and see this little patch of Time, and mark the pomp and ceremony with which your worn-out garment is laid to rest beside mine? Do you see your husband, as he stands looking down upon his own coffin? And do you understand how strange is the experience, one through which probably no other man has ever passed?"

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

It was over at last, that tenderest of all the sacred services in the great Church's Liturgy. Living and Dead were alike dismissed with those comprehensive words of grace, love, and fellowship; the threefold blessing of the Triune God.

SCENE XVI

"Who Was He?"

Scene XVI

"WHO WAS HE?"

COLIN and Eva walked down the hill together, sympathetic friends and humble dependents standing aside to let them pass.

They talked in low voices, decorously; but the sense of relief from tension which follows on a funeral, shewed in their brightening faces, as they turned with undisguised pleasure toward the beautiful house which was now their own possession.

"Colin, I know why that man's face seemed familiar to me. You remember I whispered to you when we noticed him in the church that I was certain I had seen him before?"

"Well? Had you?"

"No. But—it's very curious. Just as we turned from the grave—you saw how he

stood gazing down at the coffins?—he looked up, and his eyes met mine. Then I remembered. He is extraordinarily like the photographs of my father."

"Could he be a relation?"

"Not that I know of. My father was an only child, and I never heard of cousins."

"Well, we can tell Thomas to find out who he is. I say, dear! Won't tea be nice! Let's have it in the Oak Room. I shall make that my smoking-room, if you have no objection."

SCENE XVII

In the Pine Wood

Scene XVII

IN THE PINE WOOD

LUKE SPARROW strode through the pine woods, taking a short cut from the churchyard back to the inn.

His train for the south left in an hour.

Hurrying footsteps came behind him. At first he took them for an echo of his own; then realised that he was being followed, and walked the faster. He had no wish to be accosted.

"Sir Nigel! Sir Nigel!"

He stopped and turned sharply.

Old Thomas, breathless, in deepest black, was hastening down the stony path.

"Your pardon, Sir Nigel. May I speak with you?"

"What is it, old friend?"

"Sir Nigel, you are going? Don't leave

us behind, Mary and me. Now we have lost our dear lady, we cannot stay here. Already there are changes. We shall not be wanted. We know too much about our lady's ways and wishes. Pipes in the Oak Room she never did allow, nor whisky and soda in the morning. Her ladyship's last word to me was: 'If possible, go with Sir Nigel, Thomas, you and Mary. You know his ways, and I would like to feel Mary was there to do his mending and airing, and see that he has properly cooked meals.' Our dear lady has left an annuity of two hundred a year between us, and we have our savings, and no encumbrances, thank God. It isn't a question of wages; it's a question of home, and the Fam'ly —boy and man, Sir Nigel, for over fifty years."

He paused for breath and a pocket-handkerchief.

"Your pardon, Sir Nigel." He wiped the tears from his furrowed cheeks. "Boy and man, Sir Nigel, for half a century. I ran

beside your pony, sir, as you may remember."

"I don't remember, Thomas; but *She* did; and I have no doubt you do."

He considered.

Was it really Her wish?

He thought of the thousand pounds in bank notes in the despatch-box at the inn.

"Of course you shall come, old friend; and Mary with you. But I have no home as yet. We must make one together. I am going south by the express. Could you be happy in London? I will find a cosy flat. As soon as I have found it, I will send for you and Mary."

The old man blew his nose.

"Beg pardon, Sir Nigel." His relief was pathetic. "We felt if we lost you again, we lost all. It isn't a matter of money. It's service, and our lady's wishes, and love of you, Sir Nigel. Boy and man——"

"Right. Tell Mary the thing's settled, I'm off in an hour, Thomas. I don't want any awkward questions."

"True, Sir Nigel. The doctor wanted to know why you had left the house before the new master and mistress arrived. He had counted on you to give them full particulars of our lady's last hours. He has been hindered from coming over until to-day, by a very serious case. As I say to Mary, there are always dispensations! But he has gone down to the house now. And you were noticed at the grave. There will be talk in every home by nightfall. Douglas saw you, and Fergusson and old Nannie Steer. You remember them, Sir Nigel?"

No. The sub-conscious well was rapidly growing deeper, its memories more elusive. Douglas, Fergusson, old Nannie Steer, conveyed nothing to him. Only his Treasure in the heavens was inalienably his own. But he began to realise how largely his subconsciousness had drawn from hers. With her departure from this earthly setting, all its memories were fading into dream-like vagueness.

"To see you standing at the grave, Sir

Nigel, looking down at *that* coffin! It was like the Judgment Day. It made my blood run cold; and Mary well-nigh swooned."

"It need not have, Thomas; any more than when I stood looking down into that drawer when you shewed me my old suits, folded, and laid away by careful hands."

He stood, looking upwards. A shaft of sunlight, piercing through the pines, fell on his face.

"Neither my wife nor I are in that grave. There is no death, old friend. That which we call death is fuller life—life more abundant."

"Speaking of clothes, Sir Nigel, and such like, her ladyship gave me orders to pack everything in the dressing-room in two trunks and keep them in our quarters until I knew where to send them. Her ladyship wished you to have the things she had so treasured. None ever went into that room, save her ladyship and myself; or Mary, if our lady was away. So no questions will be asked when they find it bare. Her ladyship

also gave me a list of furniture she has left to me and Mary, meaning it for you; her couch in the Oak Room, your pipe-rack, her writing-table, her easy chair, and a few other things. She dictated the paper and signed it that morning while the doctor was with her; but she told me, by word of mouth, they were left to us, for you."

So this was her way of making sure that he should have a home, filled with sweet memories of her. Oh, Miriam, belovèd! Now it was for him to find that home, for himself and these two faithful souls.

"Very well, Thomas. They can come with you and Mary when the home is ready. I will try for a jolly little house, not a flat. It will be more home-like. Whatever she wished, or said, or did, is right. Only be careful no questions are asked. You know what people would say if they knew of the happenings of this past week? They would say that she, and you, and I, were mad."

The old man smiled. "It don't matter what folk say, Sir Nigel. All that really

matters, is what our own hearts know; and that her ladyship died happy."

As Luke Sparrow walked on alone, at a rapid pace, through the pine woods, he repeated those words to himself. "All that really matters is what our own hearts know." Aye, how true! That, and one thing more. "Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts."

SCENE XVIII

The Home She Planned

Scene XVIII

THE HOME SHE PLANNED

Three months later

LUKE SPARROW sat at his writing-table reading "proof."

The cosy study was filled with books and littered with the work he loved.

Presently, with noiseless step, entered old Thomas; turned on the lights, made the fire blaze, stealthily tidied the room, moved a small table to the couch, and brought in the tea.

"Take it while it's hot, Sir Nigel."

"All right, Thomas."

"Mary has made a dish of those bannocks, Sir Nigel, of which you and her ladyship used to be so fond."

"Mary is a wonder, Thomas. Her memory is as excellent as her cooking. All

right; I'll take half an hour off. I've done a good day's work already. . . . No; don't draw the curtains yet awhile. There may be some lonely soul passing by, in the cold and dark out there, who will enjoy the sight of this cosy warmth and brightness. I will draw them, when I get back to work."

As the old man left the room, closing the door behind him, Luke Sparrow pushed aside his mass of papers, rose, flung himself upon the couch, stretched his limbs, and shook off the strain of long hours of concentration.

A tempting tea tray, arranged with much care and thought, was at his elbow. Mary's golden bannocks stood for memories—memories not his own; but he took them, on trust, from Mary.

The room was a perfect combination of work and comfort; outside interests and home.

He took a miniature-case from his pocket and opened it. Exquisitely painted on

ivory, the lovely face looked out at him ; the lips smiled their message of abiding tenderness. It had been painted before the night which turned that bright hair white. Of all the treasures he had found in the despatch-box, this meant the most to him.

He looked long at it now, as he sat alone upon that couch on which he had once lain with her arms wrapped around him.

" Miriam, belovèd," he said, " I think you would like this home of ours. And I believe you would like my book. And I am sure you would be amused to know that Mary drags old Thomas out ' of an evening ' to see ' the pictures.' Mary is having the time of her life, and Thomas thinks it is bad for Mary's soul. But you and I would agree that Mary's soul can stand a little more gaiety than her life with Thomas has hitherto provided.

" Now I must pour out my own tea from your beautiful William the Fourth silver teapot, so solid and embossed, and sturdy

on its little feet, with a pair of acorns on the lid.

"Miriam, do you know how lonely it is to have all this, yet not to have you? And so slowly the months pass; and so many years are yet to come.

"Oh, my belovèd! Send me thoughts of hope and patience, and strength to play the man."

SCENE XIX

The Great Chance

Scene XIX

THE GREAT CHANCE

Ten months later

LUKE SPARROW, erect and vigorous, in the khaki uniform which had begun to mean so much to England, stood on his study hearth-rug, giving final instructions to his old servant.

"I'm in luck, Thomas. So early in the day; but I lost no time, and it's France for me to-morrow; and, please God, that means Belgium, and in the thick of it. You will look after things, till I get back. Don't let Mary fret. Give her a cheerful time.

"If I don't return, my things will come back to you. My will is in that drawer. Everything will belong to you two faithful souls. That is what her ladyship would wish. . . . That's all right, Thomas. Yes, I

know all about it. Good-bye, old friend. . . .

"And now send Mary to me. I must have one dear woman to hug me good-bye before I go."

SCENE XX

"Coming!"

Scene XX

"COMING!"

Four years later

A FOREST of white crosses on the battlefields of France.

Two British soldiers moved among them, seeking a special name.

At length they found it.

Luke Sparrow

"Ah, here it is! Here he lies. Well, there are many above ground, hale and hearty, who but for him would be lying as he lies to-day; and I'm one of them.

"Brave? Good Lord, he didn't know what fear meant! Each time he went over the top you might have thought he was going to his bridal. He used to call this bloody war the Great Chance. And such

a pal! Do you mind how it kept our spirits up only to look at him, let alone his hand on your shoulder or his voice in your ear?

"But life-saving was his passion. No place was too hot for him, if a helpless man lay there to be brought in. V.C.? He earned it thirty times over! And always came through all right.

"But at last they got him, and no mistake about it. Both legs, and through the chest; past operating.

"I was with him at the end. He'd been lying very still, just groaning a bit on the quiet; when suddenly he rises up on his elbow and shouts, 'Coming!' clear as a bugle call. 'Coming!' he says, and falls back dead."

The two stood looking at the simple white cross and the grave it marked; then turned to watch an old man, in sombre clothing, who moved among the graves, anxiously seeking. He carried in his hand a wreath of immortelles.

At last he drew near, read Luke Sparrow's

name, and, baring his head, fell upon his knees beside the cross, and sobbed.

The soldiers turned away, respecting the old man's grief.

After a while he rose, laid the wreath at the foot of the cross, and went his way.

Luke Sparrow's comrades came back and stooped to read what was written on a card attached to the wreath.

"Hullo!" said one, "The old chap has made a mistake. See here!"

To

SIR NIGEL GUIDO CARDROSS TINTAGEL, BART.

in faithful and loving remembrance
from his humble servants
Mary and Thomas

Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends.

"Leave it alone," said the other soldier. "He was worth a score of barts! Let him keep the wreath."

Then they also went their way.

And the winds of God blew gently over that forest of plain crosses, bearing the vast army of heroic names, which are not forgotten before God, but inscribed for ever in the Book of Life.

"O years! And Age! Farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost i' the Sea
Of vast Eternity.

Where never Moon shall sway
The Stars; but she
And Night, shall be
Drown'd in one endless Day."

ROBERT HERRICK (1629).

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